



# THE CHANGING FABRIC OF JAPAN

Acc. No.	9928
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Book No.	43

G. 70.

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THE  
CHANGING FABRIC  
OF JAPAN

*by*

CAPTAIN M. D. KENNEDY

AUTHOR OF

"SOME ASPECTS OF JAPAN AND HER DEFENCE FORCES"

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## FOREWORD AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

THE War has wrought many changes. Even Japan, far removed as she was from the main theatres of active operations, could not escape its effects.

In certain respects, the changes now taking place are even more marked in Japan than they are in the other leading countries of the World. The reason is not far to seek. They are due primarily to the sudden and rapid growth of industrialism, induced within her confines by the circumstances of the War. Together with this transition from agriculture to trade and industry, there have sprung up, with equal rapidity, all those social, economic and political problems that are the inevitable concomitants of industrialisation. To these, and to the general unsettling effect of the War and the Russian Revolution, there has been added the terrible earthquake disaster of 1923 and all it implied.

All these things combined, coming, as they did, so close together, have brought about changes in the social and economic structure of the country, of a far-reaching and fundamental character, within a surprisingly short space of time. It is the purpose of this book, therefore, to describe something of the nature of these changes and of the many conflicting factors and influences that must be taken into account by anyone seeking to understand what value may be set upon them and what further developments may reasonably be expected.

The greater part of the material contained within these pages is new. Some of it, however, has appeared already in the form of articles contributed by myself to *The*

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*Nineteenth Century* and *The Fortnightly Review*. To the editors of these two publications I desire, therefore, to express my thanks for their courtesy in permitting me to utilise them, in a revised and amended form, as the basis for certain chapters in this book.

M. D. KENNEDY.

Tokyo, *April* 1930.

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# CHAPTER I

## SIGNS OF CHANGE

IN 1904, just over quarter of a century ago, Professor Chamberlain produced the fifth and last edition of his classic, *Things Japanese*. Ten years ago it was still almost as accurate regarding the conditions then existing in Japan as it was when first published. For the student, it remains an indispensable standard work, even to this day, and is likely to continue as such for all time ; but post-War, and to an even greater extent post-Earthquake, developments have been so rapid and extensive that certain sections of it are sadly in need of revision. Particularly is this true with regard to those portions dealing with social conditions.

Japan's rise from obscurity to a position of first-class importance in the councils of the World during the half century that preceded the outbreak of her war with Russia, and her change from mediaeval feudalism to modern representative government within the same brief space of time, attracted the wonder and admiration of the western nations. The spectacular nature of this extraordinary metamorphosis made an appeal to the imagination, such as no subsequent developments could ever hope to equal ; yet in certain respects the changes and progress witnessed during the past ten or fifteen years are every bit as striking. How great these changes have been, and how little they are realised by persons not on the spot, is well illustrated by the remarks made by Dr. Nitobé, the well-known author of *Bushido* and other works on Japan, in the course of a recent conversation. Shortly before leaving Europe in 1927, on completion of his term of office

as Assistant Secretary-General to the League of Nations, a London publishing firm approached him, he said, with the request that he would write a book for them on present-day Japan. Thinking this would be a matter of no great difficulty, he promised to comply with their wishes. He had been out of his country, however, for eight years, and it was not until his return there that he realised what vast changes had taken place in his absence. He found it impossible, therefore, to carry out his promise, until he had had time to study the changed conditions ; and, although more than two years have now gone by, he has not yet reached the stage at which he feels confident of handling his subject properly.<sup>1</sup>

Some of these changes will be examined in greater detail in later chapters. Meantime a brief outline of the more important developments bearing on the social life of the country may be given here.

When Chamberlain wrote in 1904, Japan was still engaged in her life and death struggle with Russia. Chamberlain had a pretty shrewd idea of what the outcome would be ; but even he, with all his knowledge and fine powers of deduction, could not be expected to foretell all the great changes and developments, social, political, and economic, that would take place during the next quarter of a century.

One of the principal outcomes of Japan's emergence as victor a year later was the recovery of the leased territory of the Liaotung Peninsula, which she had been forced to relinquish in 1895 on account of diplomatic pressure from Russia, Germany, and France. Many of the changes and developments now being witnessed in Japan may be said to have their origin in the foothold then obtained in Manchuria. Its importance cannot, therefore, be over-rated, and no proper understanding of the whys and

<sup>1</sup> Shortly after submitting the MS. of this book for publication, I learned that Dr. Nitobé had just completed the draft of his new work.

wherefores of present conditions can be had, unless this event is taken into full consideration.

At one time it was hoped that, by means of this foothold, Manchuria, with its vast open spaces, could be made to serve as an outlet for Japan's increasing population. For reasons that will be given later, this hope has not been, and is never likely to be, fulfilled. By extending her control over it, however, and by opening it up and developing its great economic resources, Japan has been able to provide herself with a ready supply of valuable raw materials close at hand and with a market for her own manufactures. The effect of this on the economic and social development of Japan is clearly seen. It has helped her to expand her industries and increase her trade, and out of this expansion of trade and industry have arisen most of those serious social problems with which she is now faced. As for the political results of the foothold in Manchuria, the course of events in the Far East, since it was obtained, speaks for itself. The annexation of Korea in 1910 and all that it has entailed ; the presentation of the "Twenty-One Demands" in 1915 ; the constantly recurring friction with China and the strained relations that have been witnessed from time to time both with America and with Soviet Russia ; the exclusion of Manchuria from the civil disturbances that have racked all the rest of China ever since the overthrow of the Manchu dynasty in 1911, and the despatch of Japanese military expeditions on several different occasions to ensure the maintenance of peace in Manchuria. In all these, and in many other political developments besides, has the influence of the foothold obtained by Japan in Manchuria twenty-five years ago been evident.

While, however, it is necessary to turn back to this important event of quarter-of-a-century ago if the changes and developments now taking place are to be fully understood, it is only since the close of the World War, and more particularly since the Great Earthquake of 1923, that the



change in the social life and thought of the country has become so pronounced. Old standards of conduct and morality are being replaced by new ; the family system, which has played so important a part in the social organisation and welfare of the country for more than twelve hundred years, is breaking down under the pressure of modern economic conditions ; the good of the community above the good of the individual, which has been the rule in the past, is giving way to the promotion of personal considerations which, while assisting in the creation of individuality, is likewise tending to inculcate a spirit of selfishness ; class consciousness, which, in so far as bitterness and discontent are concerned, was formerly non-existent, is coming into being, and a spirit of social unrest and uncertainty is spreading country wide.

These are but a few of the more striking inward—perhaps spiritual would be the better word—changes which are taking place. Being mainly under the surface, they are not so readily discernible to the transient visitor or casual observer as are the more spectacular outward changes, which are plain for all to see. Yet, in so far as the future of Japan is concerned, they are perhaps the more significant. For this reason, they will be dealt with at greater length in later chapters. In this one it is only necessary to touch on the fringe. Meantime, therefore, let us turn to the more outstanding surface changes, changes that are at once apparent to anyone who, after an absence of eight or ten years, returns to Japan. Amongst these may be mentioned the sudden and rapid growth of a liking for western athletics and western music amongst the youth of the nation, the changing modes and methods of transport, and the equally conspicuous change in the ways of living.

The rapidly growing popularity of athletics is typical of the changes taking place. So little did Western competitive sports enter into the life of the Japanese a quarter of a century ago that Chamberlain, in his classic *Things*

*Japanese*, confined his remarks on the subject to a single sentence, wedged into a five-page section on education. "... Various European sports, though not insisted on, are encouraged," he wrote, adding by way of an afterthought: "Baseball seems to be that to which the young fellows take most kindly." A few years later, in 1912, another foreign writer deplored the "... lack of any popular sport in Japan," and asserted that this lack of interest in physical sport was an unhealthy symptom and a fundamental sign of racial inferiority.

This lack of interest in athletics is now a thing of the past. The last five or six years have witnessed a truly remarkable change. Two huge stadiums, one capable of seating 65,000 and the other 30,000 spectators, have now been built in Tokyo. Another, with accommodation for as many as 80,000, has been constructed at Naruo near Kobe. Osaka boasts of one with seating capacity for 40,000, and about a dozen universities and colleges have grounds with accommodation for 10,000 and over, while a number of smaller grounds exist in various parts of the country. First-class baseball teams, composed of university undergraduates and others, give fine exhibitions of play before immense crowds of enthusiastic spectators, and fully hold their own against American teams visiting Japan. Some of them even go to the United States on tour and acquit themselves with credit, while in every student centre in the country the game is played with skill and enthusiasm. Baseball is now, in fact, as popular and universal in Tokyo and the urban districts of Japan as cricket is in England, and the inter-varsity contests arouse even more enthusiasm than the great wrestling championships, of which Chamberlain, writing of them at a time when they were at the zenith of their popularity, said they had "been known to draw over 28,000 spectators." Baseball is at present the most popular sport in Japan, but the last two or three years have witnessed a marked increase in the popularity of rugby football, and

some close observers of the recent progress made, go so far as to predict that ten years hence rugby will have taken the place of baseball as the national sport of Japan.

The Japanese rugby team that visited Australia in 1927 suffered defeat in every game it played, but it learned a great deal from its tour and imparted its newly acquired knowledge to its fellow players in Japan. The visit of a British Army team from the Shanghai Defence Force in 1928 added still further to that knowledge, and the improvement in play since then was seen to full advantage in a game played in Tokyo, early in May last year, in the presence of H.R.H. the Duke of Gloucester, between a Japanese team and a team from H.M.S. "Suffolk." The Japanese "three-quarter" line was excellent and the enthusiasm of the 50,000 spectators, mainly Japanese students, was a good indication of the increasing popularity of the game in this country.

Other games besides rugby and baseball have likewise made great headway since the War. Cricket has never taken on in Japan, but hockey and association football are both making good progress. Boxing, which was practically unknown here until a few years ago, has an increasing number of followers; golf is being taken up with enthusiasm by Japanese business men and officials, and a number of first-rate courses have been laid out during the past few years; tennis courts are springing up everywhere and Japanese tennis champions are making names for themselves in the Davis Cup and other international competitions. The success of the Japanese participants in the Olympic games at Amsterdam in 1928 led two well-known British athletes, D. G. A. Lowe and E. E. Porritt, to declare in their recently published book, *Athletics*, that "... The natural genius of the Japanese for field events and the evident inspiration afforded by these contests in Europe may lead to the creation of a new athletic power." Japanese swimming champions have competed with success against some of the finest swimmers

in the World, and more than one world swimming record has been created by Japan in recent years ;<sup>1</sup> Japanese horsemen gave a good account of themselves at the Olympia in London a year or two ago, and Japanese oarsmen have appeared at Henley. Mountaineering too is yearly attracting an ever-increasing number of Japanese, while skiing, skating and other winter sports now count their Japanese devotees in many tens of thousands.

The sudden interest in all these sports during the past decade, and the rapid progress made in mastering them, has surprised even foreigners long resident in the country. There are some who fear the possibility of an over-indulgence in sports at the expense of work. One cannot but feel, however, that, generally speaking, the growing popularity of athletics amongst the younger generation of Japanese is a healthy symptom. Equally encouraging is the fact that professionalism, which tends to prostitute the true aim of sport, has not yet made an appearance.

It is not without interest that some, at least, of these sporting activities owe not a little to the interest taken in them by Prince Chichibu, the Emperor's brother and Heir-Presumptive to the Japanese Throne. Even before his visit to England in 1925, he had shown himself to be a keen mountaineer and an interested spectator of baseball, and since his return from England he has, by his personal attendance at all the principal rugger matches, done much to popularise rugby football. His enthusiasm for rugger was well seen when, during one of the games between the Shanghai Defence Force and a Japanese university team in 1928, he brought with him to see the game a party of officers and men of the 3rd Infantry Regiment, a unit with which he was serving at the time as a subaltern. It was possibly in part due to Prince Chichibu's belief in the value of rugby football, that the Japanese military

<sup>1</sup> Iriye—200 metres backstroke—2 minutes 37.8 seconds. Iriye—400 metres backstroke—5 minutes 42 seconds. Tsuruta—200 metres breast-stroke—2 minutes 45 seconds.

authorities recently decided to introduce a modified form of the game into the Army. The innovation, however, met with a somewhat mixed reception, as there are many conservative-minded officers who consider that games should have no part in the curriculum of a conscript soldier's training, especially now that the period of colour-service has been reduced from the original three years to a period of less than two.<sup>1</sup>

If these prejudices can be overcome and rugger takes a proper hold on the Army, the prediction regarding its replacing baseball in popularity may well prove correct. Something like 100,000 men pass through the ranks yearly and then return to their homes in every quarter of the Japanese Empire. Their influence in disseminating a knowledge of what they have learned during their time with the colours, whether it be discipline, ideas of loyalty and patriotism, or new forms of sport, is a factor that has a far greater bearing on the life and thought of the country than is generally realised.

Whether or no the Army takes up rugger and other western forms of athletics, one thing is certain; the educated youth of Japan is taking more and more to western games and sports of all kinds. If, therefore, it is true, as the pessimistic writer of 1912 declared, that lack of interest in physical sport is an unhealthy symptom and a fundamental sign of racial inferiority, it must be admitted that the Japanese have now gone far to remove this reproach from being levelled at themselves.

It is not, however, only in the realm of athletics that very striking and unlooked for developments have been witnessed during the past decade in Japan. Up to ten or twelve years ago western music too, for example, had but little attraction for the Japanese; yet to-day we have

<sup>1</sup> Rugby football was introduced into the Japanese Navy about seven years ago, and is now compulsory at the Naval Academy at Etajima and at the Naval Engineering School at Maizuru. The disciplinary value of the game having been recognised, the authorities have decided to encourage its further development amongst the cadets.

good Italian and Russian opera companies visiting Japan, and many of the world's most famous musicians and singers—Kreisler, Heifitz, Thibaud, Galli-Curci and others—carrying out concert tours and drawing packed and enthusiastic audiences wherever they appear. Tokyo, for its part, can now boast of several good Japanese orchestras and bands, as well as individual players and singers, who give concerts which are invariably well attended, and many of the leading daily papers devote special columns to musical news.

Nor is it merely, nor even mainly, music of the jazz variety that the Japanese demand. The gramophone shops, for example, do a roaring trade in records of classical music. This is all the more surprising when one considers the contrast it affords with the native music of Japan, which, to most foreigners, is little more than a cacophonic succession of strange discords. How suddenly this liking for good western music has developed is well shown by what Professor Chamberlain wrote in his standard work on Japan twenty odd years ago. In this we read, "One never hears a party of Japanese talking seriously about music ; musical questions are never discussed in the newspapers." Up to as recently as six or eight years ago, that still held good ; but it is true no longer. It is entirely at variance with the facts as they exist to-day. So much, then, for the spread of western athletics and music. Now let us turn to the change in the means of transport and in the ways of living.

Up to the time of the Great Earthquake, none but the wealthy could afford motor cars of their own. Cars could be hired in the larger towns and cities, but they were comparatively few in number and the cost of hire was prohibitive for most people. The normal means of passenger transport, apart from electric trams, was the *rikisha*, while luggage and goods of all sorts were conveyed by horse, bullock or man-power. Taxis and motor-buses were practically non-existent, and motor lorries were used



but little. The change during the few short years that have elapsed since then is remarkable. Not only has the private ownership of cars shown a considerable increase, but motor lorries and motor-buses are seen now in large numbers in all the larger towns and cities, and even to some extent in the country districts, while cheap taxis can be picked up at any time of the day or night in the main centres. The *rikisha*, on the other hand, is disappearing rapidly from the streets. Its patrons are now confined largely to round-the-world-tourists, who are fondly under the delusion that, by riding in one, they are "doing as the Japanese do." Actually, of course, they are doing what most Japanese do not do, for its use by Japanese is now confined almost exclusively to *geisha* and, to some extent, to doctors.

In so far as Tokyo is concerned, the great increase in motor traffic since the Earthquake is partly due to the realisation of the value of motor transport, brought home by the dislocation of all other means of transit at the time of that terrible seismic disaster. It is due in part also to the replacement of the former narrow, tortuous lanes of the capital by broad open thoroughfares. The reconstruction, both of Tokyo and Yokohama, necessitated by the destruction wrought in 1923, has led to the laying out of fine wide roads and boulevards on modern lines in both cities. Thereby has been sounded the death-knell of a picturesque, and hitherto useful, type of light vehicle, and quicker and cheaper means of transit have taken its place.

It is not, however, in Tokyo and Yokohama only that motor traffic is rapidly displacing the slower moving means of transport of eight and ten years ago. The same phenomenon is seen, to a greater or lesser extent, in all parts of the country. Many more years, of course, will have to pass before motor transport has been developed to anything like the extent now existing in Europe or America, for outside the immediate vicinity of the larger

towns and cities, good road communications remain scarce.<sup>1</sup> It is, in fact, perhaps but natural, that the extraordinary changes in social life and thought now taking place, are confined mainly to the great centres of population. The influence of these changes, however, is far from negligible, even in the more remote country districts.

Even more striking, and perhaps more significant, than the replacement of the bullock-cart and the *rikisha* by the motor-lorry and the taxi in the streets of Tokyo and other big cities, is the sudden and rapid spread of what is known as the "café civilisation" of Japan. Before the Earthquake, a few rather second-rate western-style restaurants were to be found in the towns and cities. Most Japanese, however, preferred the old-style tea-house or other similar establishment for the preparation and serving of Japanese dishes. If a man wished to make merry with his friends, he would go to one where he could call in a *geisha* or two, to add to the enjoyment of the entertainment by song and dance and light banter. But all this is changing. None but the wealthy can now afford to patronise these *geisha* establishments to any great extent. Many of them are, in consequence, being hard hit financially. To add to their discomfiture, new and formidable rivals, in the shape of dance-halls and cafés and western-style restaurants, have sprung up in abundance, and are drawing custom away from them. In order to compete with these upstarts, the *geisha*, who formerly danced only for their patrons and not with them, are taking to western-style dancing, and are often to be seen visiting the dance-halls and studying the steps of the couples taking part in the dances. As a result, most of the *geisha* establishments now equip themselves with gramophones with dance-

<sup>1</sup> The Railway Ministry, recognising the value of motor transport as an auxiliary to railway traffic, is planning to build motor roads, and operate motor services of its own, in certain districts, instead of extending railway lines. The survey of 1500 miles of these proposed roads has already been started, and the survey of a further 1500 miles is projected.



music records. These are turned on after the meal, and the guests are then invited to show their skill at the fox-trot or waltz, with *geisha* as partners. This is a very new development, but it is typical of the changing times.

It is this rapid increase of cafés and dance-halls in the past two or three years that has brought about the so-called "café civilisation" of Japan.<sup>1</sup> It has grown up with extraordinary rapidity and vigour, and has struck the *geisha* business a blow, from which it may never recover. From the moral standpoint it is still too early to say whether this is to the good or to the bad of the country. Both the *geisha* house and the café has its dark side; yet from historical, as well as sentimental reasons, there will be many who will regret the gradual passing of the *geisha*. She is, however, a relic of feudal times and, as such, is something of an anachronism in these days of feminine emancipation. Yet it is the change in the economic life of Japan, quite as much as in the social side, that is bringing about her downfall. *Geisha* entertainments are now among the most expensive luxuries in Japan. The café, on the other hand, is within the range of all but the poorest.

Many of the cafés that are springing up in all directions are tawdry affairs, with cheap drinks, garish decorations, and "jazz" ground out on a much over-worked gramophone or raucous radio set. In this respect they compare unfavourably with the *geisha* houses, where the furnishings and general appearance are of the simplest. In this very simplicity they possess an aesthetic charm and dignity, which is entirely foreign to the modern café, and they are always in the best taste. To the young student or office clerk, however, the café, despite its obvious crudities, serves as a club, where he can meet his friends and where he can enjoy the company of pert young waitresses at a tenth, or less, of the cost of a *geisha* spree. For those who

<sup>1</sup> Official figures published in December 1929 showed a total of 21,000 cafés in Japan, 3300 being in Tokyo City.

prefer something more refined, there are high-class cafés and restaurants, as good as most that are to be found in western cities, and far cheaper than the *geisha* establishments.

This "café civilisation" has only sprung up since the Great Earthquake of 1923 and is the bugbear of the police. These keepers of the law regard the innumerable cafés and dance-halls, not only as centres of immorality but also as the meeting places of students and others imbued with "dangerous thoughts," by which term is meant advanced social theories. To some extent the police strictures are probably justified, but there are good grounds for the suspicion that, in so far as the charges of immorality are concerned, they are not only exaggerated but are due, at least in part, to vested interests behind the scenes. These are the *geisha* houses and licensed quarters, both of which stand to lose by the strong competition forced upon them by the increasing number of dance halls and cafés.

This sudden craze for dancing, and the intermingling of the sexes which these dance-halls and cafés have brought about, is symptomatic of the change now taking place, both in the social life of the country and in the standards of conduct and morals. Formerly the two sexes were kept strictly apart, and, except in the case of the *geisha* and the inmates of the licensed quarters, social intercourse between men and women, other than close relations, and even between boys and girls, other than very young children, was practically unknown. Modern economic conditions have helped to some extent to bring about greater contact between the two sexes; but the sudden rise of this "café civilisation," and all that it implies, seems rather to be a sign of reaction after centuries of suppression. It is, as it were, the outcome of a revolt against the strict social rules and barriers that have hitherto existed with regard to the two sexes, and is particularly in evidence among a section of the youth of the nation.

The Great War has left an indelible mark on the life of

England and of most other countries. The Great Earthquake of 1923 has left a similar mark on the life of the Japanese people, and in no part of Japan is this more noticeable than in Tokyo, the Capital City of the Empire. Some indication of this is given in the following quotation from a recent article in one of the leading foreign journals published in Japan : <sup>1</sup>

“ The steam engine revolutionised the industrial life of the nineteenth century. The Ford plant revolutionised post-war American life. It is the earthquake disaster which revolutionised the present-day Tokyo life. Five-hundred-million yen of the ‘ national shame loan ’ <sup>2</sup> made Tokyo of ferro-concrete, streams of One-Yen taxis, jazz music and dance halls, cafés and waitresses, *moga* and *mobo*, <sup>3</sup> the prosperity of department stores and the passing of retail shops, of buying clothes that are good for only one season instead of many years, of sports and cinemas that take men and women out of home, the change of taste to uniformity from selectivity etc. etc.”

In this paragraph are summed up most of the outstanding changes that would be sure to strike the visitor who, after an absence of six or eight years, returned to Japan to-day. Some of them may be but surface changes, but most of them go deeper than that and reflect, to a greater or lesser degree, the transition now taking place throughout the whole country. Lovers of Old Japan, with its atmosphere of mediaeval enchantment, will regret its passing ; but it is inevitable and, though some of the changes may be for the worse, there is much that is commendable in the New Japan now springing up.

With athletics being taken up with enthusiasm and

<sup>1</sup> “ Japan Advertiser ” of 27th September 1929.

<sup>2</sup> The loan floated for the reconstruction of Tokyo after the Earthquake. Its terms were considered humiliating, hence the name by which it is known.

<sup>3</sup> *Moga* is short for *modan garu*, the Japanese transliteration of “ modern girl.” *Mobo* is similarly derived from *modan boi* i.e. “ modern boy.” The terms are applied to a certain type of the ultra-modern youth of the nation that has come into prominence in the past few years.

quickly mastered by the youth of the nation ; with a real liking for good western music spreading rapidly amongst the educated classes of the people ; with universal manhood suffrage granted and with the women of the country beginning to make their voices heard, demanding equal civil and political rights with their men folk ; with a young and vigorous proletarian movement making progress throughout the country and extending its influence in both national and local politics ; with an energetic and enterprising vernacular Press, some units of which can now boast of daily circulations of a million or more ; with Tokyo, Yokohama and Osaka being rebuilt and reconstructed on modern lines, with fine broad roads and great eight-storied ferro-concrete buildings ; with these and with many other fundamental changes taking place, Japan and the Japanese of to-day are very different from what they were even ten years ago. Those who knew Japan before the War, but who have not been there since, would find an almost unbelievable change in the conditions, if they returned there to-day.

## CHAPTER II

### TOKYO, THE CENTRE OF CHANGE

It is probable that in no place in Japan are the present changes in the social life and thought of the people more vividly portrayed than in Tokyo, the capital city of the Empire. It should not be out of place, therefore, to include a chapter describing something of this city of marked contrasts.

Even to the transient visitor, who spends but a few days in the Japanese capital, the extraordinary mixture of East and West, of ancient and modern, of old-time leisureliness and present-day bustle, are at once apparent ; but it requires more than a mere stay of a week or two at the curiously grotesque Imperial Hotel, with its strangely artificial atmosphere, to obtain anything approaching a real perception of Tokyo and its component parts.

The tourist sees the Marunouchi district with its fine, modern, eight-storied buildings of reinforced concrete, and its smooth, asphalted roads and stone-flagged pavements. To find such evidence of solidity, in a country renowned for its devastating earthquakes, comes as a surprise and upsets all his preconceived notions of Japan, as depicted in picture-books, in colour prints, and on egg-shell china—a land of cherry blossom and flowers, of diminutive houses and gaily-clad maidens.

If, as is probable, he visits some of the more famous shrines and temples, or is taken to see the principal parks and gardens of the city, his first shock at finding the commercial district of Marunouchi so unlike anything expected by him will be partially alleviated. Especially will this be so if the visit is carried out in the spring or

summer, when the flowers are in bloom and the Japanese women and children have discarded their dull, drab-coloured *kimono* of the winter months for brighter and more attractive apparel. The solemn grandeur of the ancient *Shinto* and Buddhist edifices, with their air of calm, dignified composure ; the natural beauty of the parks and landscape-gardens, with their flowering trees and shrubs ; these are in as strong contrast to the noise and bustle of the busy streets, in the commercial and industrial sections of Tokyo, as are the groups of laughing children, and the gaily coloured *kimono* of the girls, in contrast to the crowds of business men, in their unromantic foreign-style clothes, hurrying on foot or in private cars to their offices.

Contrasts such as these are plainly visible to the passing visitor, but the impressions gained by him cannot but be superficial ; for Tokyo, on account of its history and of its strange mixture of East and West, is unlike any other capital city in the world, whilst its immense size, roughly computed at 100 square miles, its population of over 2,000,000, and its varied aspects, make it impossible for even the most ardent and energetic sightseer to obtain personal knowledge of more than a small fraction of it or of the life led by its inhabitants.

As cities go, Tokyo has not a very long history ; but without a brief examination of its past, its present position and condition are hard to understand.

Five hundred years ago the site of the present city was largely marshy ground, interspersed with shallow lagoons. The only houses in the vicinity were those of a small fishing village known as Yedo, meaning “ estuary gate.”

In 1456 a warrior named Ota Dokwan built himself a fortress near by, and nearly a century and a half later the famous Japanese soldier-statesman, Hideyoshi, recognising the military value of the position, took possession of the castle. This was really the genesis of the present-day Tokyo, for shortly after Hideyoshi's death, followed as it



was by the inauguration of the Tokugawa Shogunate, Iyeyasu, the founder of the new *régime*, made Yedo his capital. Although the Emperor and his court remained at Kyoto for another 250 years, the seat of government has been at this " estuary gate " ever since, the name being changed to Tokyo (meaning Eastern Capital) the year after the Emperor's restoration to power in 1868, at which time the Imperial Court was transferred there from Kyoto.

During the two and a half centuries of Tokugawa rule, every feudal lord in the country was obliged to pay an annual visit to the Shogunate Capital. As many of them left members of their families there permanently, Yedo soon developed into a flourishing castle town, with distinctive features of its own. Many of these features, despite constant conflagrations and occasional calamitous earthquakes, are retained to this day. Thus, even now, the city of Tokyo may be said to centre around the Emperor's main Palace, within its double line of moats and great stone walls, on the site formerly occupied by the Shogun's castle and, prior to that, by Ota Dokwan's fortress.

From the artistic point of view, Tokyo may be accounted fortunate to possess this vast enclosure with its fine old grey walls and broad moats, their solemn grandeur enhanced by great stretches of grassy slopes and spreading trees and magnificent old gateways ; yet, for a modern city, it has its disadvantages. The inner grounds, which comprise many acres of land, being private, act as an obstacle to the improvement of communications, for these grounds are situated in the heart of the city, where, for practical purposes, the main arterial thoroughfares should intersect. Long detours have, therefore, to be made, and inter-communication is hampered accordingly.

This palace, with its extensive grounds, may be regarded as the seed from which Tokyo has grown. Round this, in Tokugawa days, clustered the houses of the noblemen and

their armed retainers ; and, as a natural consequence, merchants and their families settled themselves round about to provide for their wants. These in turn attracted others. Provision also had to be made for the entertainment and amusement of all classes of the community, and many of these ancient forms of pastime and diversion exist in the Japanese capital to this day.

The increasing population of the city made it necessary to find land on which to set up shops and dwelling-places. It was but natural therefore, that in process of time, reclamation work was carried out. Little by little the marshy ground was drained off and the shallow lagoons filled up, whilst in their place solid ground covered with buildings sprang into being. In consequence of their origin, the low-lying sections of the city are still much subject to flood in the rainy season, and many hundreds of houses are inundated yearly. Much suffering, accompanied not infrequently by loss of life, is caused in consequence, despite recent improvements brought about by modern engineering.

It must not be imagined, however, that Tokyo is composed entirely of low-lying ground. Certain sections of the city, it is true, are but little above sea-level. These parts, like the great industrial city of Osaka, sometimes called the Venice of Japan, are intersected by a great network of canals connected with the Sumida river. The greater part of Tokyo, however, is undulating, and the present-day residential quarters of the city are mainly on high ground. Parts of these were formerly outlying villages ; but, by the gradual outward extension of the city limits, they have, in the passage of years, become linked together and welded into one great urban district. The semi-rural appearance still retained by these sections of Tokyo is one of the attractions of the Japanese capital. Thanks to the abundance of trees and foliage throughout them, pleasing and picturesque vistas are abundant. Persons who are content to judge Tokyo by its business



quarters and to go no farther afield, profess to see nothing attractive in the place. It has, nevertheless, a certain charm of its own which, for those who have eyes to see, has a strong appeal; and in spite of vast changes there are still plenty of back streets and quiet corners where the old-world atmosphere has been retained to this day. Imperfections and inconveniences are by no means lacking, but great improvements have been made under the earthquake restoration plans.

The changed appearance of the greater part of Tokyo since the Earthquake of 1923, is, in fact, most marked. Gone are most of the narrow winding streets and lanes of ten years ago. In their place are appearing fine broad roads and boulevards. Instead of roads inches deep in mud or dust, looking for all the world like ploughed fields, are smooth, asphalt-surfaced thoroughfares provided with modern means of drainage. Pavements, which formerly were virtually unknown, are being laid on either side of all the main streets. The obnoxious system of night-soil removal by means of hand-carts still holds good throughout the major part of the city, but modern methods of sewerage disposal are gradually being installed and are, in time, to be extended to every section of the Metropolis. All these improvements, carried out at immense cost, are to the credit of those in charge of reconstruction, and in keeping with them there are now being erected many great office buildings, banks and public edifices of all sorts, splendid examples of the best and most modern western architecture.

Unfortunately, the same cannot be said of the bulk of the smaller shops and retail establishments, which now line so many of the reconstructed roads and streets. The newly-built *geisha* houses, tea-houses, and curio shops generally retain the same simple, dignified, artistic appearance that has always been associated with such places; but the great majority of the myriads of small retail shops, which are such a feature of all Japanese

towns and cities, are built in every conceivable style of hybrid architecture.<sup>1</sup> There was perhaps too much sameness of design in their predecessors of pre-Earthquake days, a sameness that lacked individuality and tended to present a somewhat monotonous appearance ; but they were at least in keeping and in harmony with one another and with their surroundings generally. The reconstructed Tokyo has gone to the other extreme, and the bizarre appearance of so many of these new buildings, of every shape, size, colour and design, leaves one wondering how an artistic people like the Japanese can tolerate such glaringly inartistic, hybrid, architectural atrocities.

Some idea of the changes wrought in Tokyo, since the earthquake and fire of 1923 levelled more than two-thirds of it to the ground, can best be gained by summarising the main points in the work of reconstruction. Road space, for example, which formerly occupied only 12 % of the total area of the urban districts, has been increased to 25 %. This has involved an immense amount of land readjustment and the removal of over 200,000 buildings. The persons thus ejected have had to be compensated, the total sum paid out in allowances for these compulsory removals and readjustments being somewhere in the neighbourhood of Y. 100,000,000, or about one-eighth of the amount spent on the whole work of reconstruction. The remaining seven-eighths, or roughly Y. 700,000,000, has been spent on the construction and reconstruction of roads, bridges, parks, sewers, and school buildings, canal improvements, social work equipment and various construction work of lesser importance. The completion of this main programme of reconstruction was celebrated on March 24th this year, and a further programme, involving the expenditure of another Y. 300,000,000, is now under consideration.

<sup>1</sup> It is said that there is one shop for every four families in Japan. This superfluity of persons engaged in the petty retail business is a serious economic problem, which sooner or later will have to be remedied.

Most of the bridges before the earthquake were of wood. As many as 366 were wholly or partially destroyed. All these have now been, or are being, replaced or repaired. Together with a large number of new additional bridges, they have been rendered both quake-proof and fire-proof. It was the fire, following the earthquake, that did the most damage in Tokyo. Everything possible is therefore being done to minimise the possibility of the spread of a similar conflagration in the future. Subsidies are offered to those who erect fire-proof buildings, roads have been widened to lessen the chance of flames sweeping across them, a number of new parks have been laid out for the double purpose of serving as "lungs" and as safety zones, and many other similar precautionary measures have been adopted. All this has brought about immense changes, both in the general appearance and in the living conditions in the Japanese Capital, and has served both to modernise and, in many respects, to beautify it.

The bizarre appearance of so many of the new streets, due, as already noted, to the extraordinary mixture of hybrid architecture, is to be regretted; but, let us hope, it is but a passing phase. Had money been available, better buildings might have been erected. Hard hit financially by the business depression following the War, and by the tremendous losses suffered in the earthquake, it says much for the energy and vitality of the Japanese that they have recovered so quickly from the blows they have suffered, and have been able to carry out the work of reconstruction so rapidly and on so large a scale as they have done. Funds being limited, something had to be sacrificed. Everything, therefore, was concentrated on providing a sound skeleton framework—good roads, bridges, parks and so on. These would be permanent features of the rebuilt city and were therefore given first consideration. In years to come, when money is more plentiful, dwellers in Tokyo will be able to build their houses and shops on a scale more in keeping with the fine framework that is now

being provided for them. Meantime, money being scarce, the people must cut their cloth to suit their purses and be content with the cheapest form of building available. Beggars cannot be choosers. In condemning the present grotesque appearance of so many of the shop-lined streets of Tokyo, it is but fair to bear this in mind.

The work of reconstruction, it should perhaps be added, has had to be carried out in two stages and has, in consequence, involved two successive changes in the appearance of the Japanese Capital. The reasons for this are well set forth in the British official report, *Economic and Financial Conditions in Japan to June 30th, 1929*, published in London by the Department of Overseas Trade.

“ In reviewing the progress of reconstruction in the districts devastated by the earthquake of 1923,” say the compilers of this report,<sup>1</sup> “ it is important to remember that the work is divided between the authorities and the people. The former are responsible for the readjustment of land-lots necessitated by the incorporation of town planning schemes in the programme of reconstruction ; the building of roads and bridges ; the excavation of canals ; the laying out of parks ; and the readjustment of underground installations. It rests with the citizens, on the other hand, to erect buildings to replace those destroyed in the catastrophe. Before the latter could take their work in hand, they had to wait for the adjustment of the land lots. To tide over the period required for this complicated task, as well as to meet the needs of improvising temporary buildings immediately after the earthquake, the town-planning regulations governing the types of buildings in specified zones were relaxed for a time. Thus the first stage of reconstruction saw new cities spring up which consisted of flimsy shops, offices and houses erected on the original foundations. In the second stage, which has made great progress during the last two years, frontages have been pushed back to give space for

<sup>1</sup> Messrs. G. B. Sansom C.M.G. and R. Boulter C.M.G., Commercial Counsellor and Commercial Secretary respectively, of the British Embassy, Tokyo.

wider roads, and temporary structures have been replaced by ferro-concrete buildings designed to resist both fire and earthquake."

In passing, it should perhaps be mentioned that the stupendous work of reconstruction has included the rebuilding, not only of Tokyo, but also of Yokohama, Yokosuka, and other towns and districts devastated by the earthquake. The total expenditure, therefore, has amounted to something like Y. 1,800,000,000. It is, however, with Tokyo that we are now concerned.

The difference in appearance between the crowded business sections of the city, where the main work of reconstruction has been carried on, and the tranquil semi-rural residential districts lying to the north and north-west, most of which have been but little affected, is most marked. Varied styles of architecture, many of them grotesque and entirely out of keeping with the general aspect, are perhaps the main feature of the business section, and there is a superficial air of Westernisation about the buildings and the people in the streets. All this, however, changes as soon as the quiet of the suburban districts is reached. Small, picturesque, Japanese-style wooden dwellings take the place of the great eight-storied reinforced-concrete office buildings and of the two and three-storied architectural atrocities, which are such an eyesore in other parts of the city. The people, too, seem to be different. Instead of the commonplace figures clad in foreign clothes, are men, women, and children dressed in loose-flowing *kimono*. This native style of dress imparts to its wearers a much more comely and attractive appearance, and not infrequently lends an air of quiet dignity, even to the plainest featured amongst them; yet many of these men in silk or cotton *kimono*, strolling leisurely by themselves or with their children in the evening hours, are the same as were seen earlier in the day arrayed in poorly-tailored foreign clothes, hurrying through the crowded streets of the business sections; for it is

customary in Tokyo, as in most other cities in Japan, for the men of the upper and middle classes to work by day clothed in the garments of the West, and then, when the day's work is over, to hurry home and change into the looser and more comfortable dress of the country. From an economic standpoint this custom is bad, as it necessitates complete sets of two kinds of clothing, Japanese and foreign—an expensive luxury ; yet there is no denying the fact that the former is much more suitable for the Japanese style of house, with its absence of furniture, whilst the latter is more practical for modern office work. Nevertheless, it presents an economic problem, which time and change of habits alone can solve.

It is when changing into his native dress in the evening that the Tokyo city worker, like the bulk of his countrymen in all walks of life, takes his daily bath. The more well-to-do have their own private bathrooms in their houses, but the majority of the people proceed to the public bath-houses, where, for the payment of a small monthly fee, they can sit immersed up to the neck in great sunken baths filled with water at a temperature of about 110° Fahrenheit, a heat which is unbearable for most Europeans. As it is only the very poorest who cannot, and do not, avail themselves of this luxury, it is probably not much exaggeration to say that 99 out of every 100 Tokyo citizens bathe daily. As the majority of these use the public baths rather than private ones of their own, it may well be claimed that one of the most striking features of Tokyo, as compared to London or any Western city, is the great number of bath-houses.

These places of ablution are generally divided by means of a light partition into two, one half for men and the other half for women ; but there is little privacy in them, for all the men bathe together in one big bath and all the women in another. The water, however, is kept reasonably clean, as all soaping and rinsing is done before getting into the bath itself.



In former days men, women, and children all bathed together ; and even now in up-country districts, especially at the hot springs, the sexes are intermingled ; but in Tokyo and the larger Japanese towns and cities this practice has been practically abolished by the police.

To the Western mind, the idea of such promiscuous bathing is apt to imply indecency and immorality ; but, speaking from personal experience, it may be stated most emphatically that, as practised in Japan, there is no suggestion of immorality or impropriety in it. On the contrary, the Japanese is apt to regard the Westerner as low-minded for seeing anything immoral in men and women performing their ablutions together in this way.

Morality is, after all, a comparative term and, despite assertions to the contrary, the Japanese, as a race, are probably no more immoral than others. The licensed quarters in Tokyo and elsewhere may be considered as proof of national immorality ; yet against this must be set the fact that street soliciting, which is all too common, for example, in Piccadilly and Leicester Square, is looked upon as a sign of very low morals by Japanese visiting London, and is entirely absent in Tokyo. Similarly, although the system of licensed prostitution is rather revolting to our minds,<sup>1</sup> yet a Japanese is genuinely disgusted, and his moral sense shocked, if he sees a man and a woman kissing each other in public, an act which he regards as essentially sensual and indecent. Up to a year or two ago, one of the principal occupations of the cinematograph censor in Japan was to cut out all the kissing depicted in the American and European films which flood the country. This particular form of censorship, however, is now much less strict than it was.

Many other instances could be quoted to demonstrate

<sup>1</sup> A movement for the abolition of licensed prostitution is rapidly growing in Japan, and is strongly supported by the vernacular Press. There are many who believe that the system will be abolished within the next decade. In several prefectures it has already been abolished and others are planning to follow.

the difference between Western and Japanese views regarding morality, but those noted must suffice. The margin between amusements and morals, however, is often so very slight, and both are so closely connected with the social life of any great city, that no description of Tokyo would be complete without showing how the two tend to merge in the everyday life of the Japanese capital. The question of entertaining friends may be taken as a case in point, for there the *geisha* steps in.

For reasons explained in the preceding chapter, the day of the *geisha* appears to be passing ; but she still occupies a position in the social life of Tokyo, and of Japan generally, that is by no means unimportant. Primarily, of course, she is a trained entertainer, and her main function in life is to add a touch of beauty and gaiety to what might otherwise be a dull evening party. Although individual *geisha* are not above trading their virtue and becoming mistresses of wealthy admirers, there is said to be a certain crude moral code amongst these singing girls, which keeps them from trespassing too freely on the preserves of their unfortunate sisters in the licensed quarters by indulging in promiscuous intercourse of this nature.<sup>1</sup>

Quite apart, however, from the question of morality amongst *geisha*, as a class, it is unfortunately true that individuals amongst them exert at times a feminine influence on infatuated patrons which makes itself felt, both in the social and political life of the country. By virtue of its being the premier city of Japan and the seat of government, in no place does this hold more true than in Tokyo. Important political matters are discussed, and big business deals concluded, in the seclusion of a private room in a *geisha* restaurant in the presence of some favoured singing girl, and cases are on record to show that decisions have, at times, been swayed by the influence of one of these fair entertainers. Many of them, in fact,

<sup>1</sup> The latest available statistics (1928) show a total of roughly 79,000 *geisha* and 51,000 licensed prostitutes in Japan.



make a point of knowing the ins and outs and the subterranean intrigues, which play so great a part in the game of politics in the Japanese capital and country at large.

In view of the not unimportant part played by *geisha* in the social life of Tokyo, a certain significance is attached to the fact that these dancing girls, as a class, are said to be deteriorating in quality. The reason for this appears to be mainly attributable to the growing independence of women in Japan, the spread of education, and the increasing number of new occupations that are being thrown open to women. Women workers in Japan are now, in fact, found in almost every walk of life, to an extent unknown in any other Oriental country. All the Tokyo omnibuses have conductresses, and even a few women taxi-drivers are to be seen plying their trade in the streets of the capital. All the big Tokyo offices employ women typists and stenographers as well as large numbers of young messenger girls, whilst nurses, teachers, waitresses, maid-servants, and women shopkeepers and assistants have to be counted in many tens of thousands in the capital city of Japan. Girls who might formerly have become the pick of the *geisha*, finding they can have greater freedom and make better money in these new openings, turn to them readily. *Geisha* recruiters have therefore to be content with inferior material to train as dancing and singing girls.

Apart, however, from this growing independence of women having its effect on the quality of the *geisha* as a class, there is now a tendency on the part of the married men to spend more of their free time with their families than was customary in former days, when men in search of amusement and relaxation generally sought for it in the company of a few chosen companions at some restaurant or tea-house, where there were *geisha* to entertain them with dancing and singing and with the light banter which was part of their training. This changing tendency appears to be attributable largely to the fact, that the

Japanese wife of former days was, in most cases, uneducated and had little or no knowledge of outside affairs. Her conversational ability was therefore exceedingly limited and, as love marriages were practically unknown, her companionship was not very exhilarating. Since the institution of compulsory education in Japan for both sexes, however, woman's mental outlook has been greatly stimulated, and her interest in outside matters has increased to a considerable extent. Love marriages are still the exception rather than the rule; but in consequence of this increased education, the Japanese wife has become a better companion for her husband. He does not, therefore, feel the same necessity as formerly for seeking diversions elsewhere. Incidentally, the *geisha*, like most other "commodities" in Japan, has, as already noted, become a very expensive luxury.

The young bachelor, of course, like the young "blood" of every country, likes an occasional spree with his friends, and although the growing popularity of the café and the dance-hall is tending to alter this, he regards a *geisha* party as the natural outlet for his high spirits, if he can afford it. But the tendency is for the married man to spend more time with his family or at his club, and in Tokyo even the big business dinners, which are a great feature in Japan, and which formerly were never considered complete without the presence of a number of *geisha* to entertain the guests, are now very often held at some foreign-style restaurant or club, without any *geisha* present.

The cinema, which is exceedingly popular in Tokyo and Japan in general, has also, in common with the dance-hall and the café, had its effect in reducing the popularity of *geisha* as a means of entertainment and relaxation, and draws immense crowds of men, women, and children. In 1928, for example, the aggregate attendance at the "pictures" amounted to over 136,000,000 people. Until a few years ago, the majority of the films exhibited were foreign productions; but here, too, an astonishing

change has taken place since the Great Earthquake, the proportion of Japanese films having risen from 10 to 85 per cent. during the last six years. To the Westerner, the Japanese-made films have but little attraction, as the movements of the actors are as a rule too artificial, conforming as they generally do to the stereotyped, classical style of the Japanese drama. A change, however, is noticeable, and a number of films conforming to the Western school of acting are now being produced.

The great increase in the proportion of Japanese films now shown is not due to any falling off in the actual number of foreign films exhibited. It is due to the recent rapid development of the Japanese film producing industry and to the increasing popularity of the cinema throughout the country. It is unfortunate that, although many of the foreign films are excellent, a large proportion of them are calculated to lower the much-vaunted "white" man (and woman) in the eyes of the Japanese masses, who, knowing no better, are apt to judge the Western nations by the very dubious morals displayed in the pictures shown on the screen.

Like the cinema, the radio has had its effect on the social life of Tokyo. Since the inauguration of broadcasting in the spring of 1925, more than 600,000 receiving sets have been installed in Japan, the main portion of these being in Tokyo.<sup>1</sup> In every part of the city, even in the poorest and most unexpected quarters, aerials are to be seen projecting above the house-tops. It is one of the many curious contrasts found in the Japanese capital that, in the small back streets of the city, it is by no means uncommon, on a hot summer night, to come across a small group of scantily-attired men, women, and children gathered around a loud speaker, listening attentively to the strains of some Italian opera or other classical music

<sup>1</sup> There are now seven broadcasting stations in Japan. Of these, the largest is in Tokyo, with rather over 300,000 subscribers, followed next by Osaka, with roughly 170,000.

emanating from its depths. The radio has, in fact, done much to assist in the popularisation of Western music which, as mentioned in the previous chapter, is one of the conspicuous features of recent years.

Music, it may be remarked, is by no means the only form of Western art popularised of late. In painting and sculpture too, Western-style art is coming into fashion, though in most cases this is to be deplored. The pure native art of Japan is of so high an order, and so wonderfully attractive, that it would be an irretrievable loss, not only to Japan herself but to the World in general, if ever it was forsaken in favour of some other. Many of the attempts at modern Western art, on the other hand, are crude in the extreme, this being particularly true of the attempts to depict the nude.

Western literature is also having its effect on Japanese writers and authors. All the leading Western classics have been translated into the vernacular, and have been read and re-read to such an extent that they have influenced the thought and style of Japanese literary men to no small degree. Tokyo bookshops abound with these translations and with Japanese novels and magazines containing articles and stories influenced by them.

Just as the cinema and the radio and Western art, music, and literature are having their effect on Japan and its capital, so too are Western sports and outdoor games of all kinds. Twenty years ago, as remarked elsewhere, Japan was virtually unknown in the international world of sport, and the youth of the nation took little or no interest in Western athletics. *Jujutsu*, fencing, and archery were widely practised, and wrestling, though limited in participants, drew immense crowds of spectators and worked up great enthusiasm amongst the people at large. The change that has come about in recent years has been noted already. Further comment at this point would therefore be superfluous.

One interesting outcome of this new and rather sudden

enthusiasm for Western sports and athletics is, that some three or four years ago the Minister of Education decided that it was having a deteriorating effect on the purely scholastic work of the schools, colleges, and universities of Tokyo and other centres of education. He therefore issued a warning that athletics must not be allowed to interfere with the more serious work of the student body. He was strongly criticised by the vernacular Press for his attempt to curtail outdoor games and sport, and certainly it would be a great mistake to discourage them. His action, however, was apparently meant mainly as a warning against unduly magnifying the value of athletics at the expense of scholastic training. That this warning was merited there can be little doubt, as there is a tendency, on the part of some colleges, to smooth the examination path for athletic champions.

Taken on the whole, however, the bulk of the Tokyo populace has simple tastes in the matter of recreation and amusement. Western sports and games are still confined mainly to the students and upper classes, and although the cinema, the radio, and the gramophone attract large numbers of enthusiasts from all sections of the community, the old pastimes of the people at large have lost but little of their attraction. Many of these are of an aesthetic nature, such as flower-viewing and moon-viewing, the cherry blossom season being the main occasion for the former, whilst the beautiful harvest moon brings out the moon-viewers in their thousands. The professional story-teller, the fortune-teller, the ancient classical drama, and the like, also have their devotees.

Visits to shrines and temples, to street night-fairs (a very attractive feature of Tokyo), and to the great modern department stores, as large and as fine as anything to be found in London, also afford a cheap and interesting form of entertainment to many tens of thousands all the year round, whilst the New Year and the cherry blossom season are the great times for merry-making and family

excursions. Much *saké* is imbibed on these last two occasions, and, as the Japanese have particularly weak heads for alcohol, a great deal of drunkenness is a prominent feature at these times. For the rest of the year, however, the people as a whole are remarkably sober and well-behaved.

In many ways the foreign resident in Tokyo is better placed than his compatriots in Kobe and Yokohama to mix with the people of the country and to establish social relations with them, for the foreign community of the capital is smaller and more scattered than those of the two "Treaty ports." In these two port cities, the majority of the foreigners live close together and keep very much to themselves, mixing but little, or not at all, with the native inhabitants, except in the transaction of business. The foreign resident of Tokyo is, however, labouring under a false delusion if he thinks that, by establishing friendly social relations with a handful of businessmen or officials in the capital, he can regard their views on the topics of the day, and their way of living, as typical of the Japanese as a nation. Unfortunately, the majority of foreigners in Japan are handicapped by the intricacies of the language, which necessitates their confining their circle of Japanese friends to those who speak English, which is generally synonymous to those who are at least partially Westernised. Pleasant as these friendships undoubtedly are, they only afford a foreigner the chance to learn the views and the ways of the Westernised, or semi-Westernised, Japanese. These are as unrepresentative of the bulk of the nation, which is still largely agricultural, as is Tokyo, with its increasing number of sky-scrapers and its foreign-clad businessmen and officials, unlike the towns and villages of Japan as a whole.

This unfortunate language difficulty is the main barrier to social intercourse between the bulk of foreigners in Japan and the native inhabitants of the country. It is



due to this impediment that one of the common complaints in foreign diplomatic and society circles in Tokyo is, that the same faces are seen at every social function and the same couples are frequently paired off at half-a-dozen dinner parties or banquets in succession. In London, Paris or Berlin, or in any of the other European capitals, the language of the country forms no such barrier, and the foreigner, be he diplomat or businessman, has little difficulty in extending his circle of friends if he wishes to do so ; but in Tokyo he is, in most cases, handicapped and restricted by the lack of a common medium of conversation.

Happily, however, most educated Japanese have at least a smattering of English. Even though it may be insufficient to enable them to carry on proper conversations in it, it is generally sufficient to enable them to use it as a vehicle of expression when necessary. The Englishman or American in Japan is, therefore, very much better off than might be imagined from what has been written above, as he can generally, when in difficulties, find someone with sufficient knowledge of English to understand him. This is particularly true of a city like Tokyo, with its multitudes of businessmen, officials, and students, most of whom have learned English at one time or another.

Summing up all that has been written above, it may be said that Tokyo is a city of strange contrasts, with an enigmatic element of its own. Whether we look at the varying styles of architecture, the transportation system, the lay-out of the different sections of the city, or the dress and customs of the people ; or whether we observe the varying degrees of efficiency and inefficiency to be found in the management of the public and private enterprises of the metropolis, or note the mixture of religious fervour and indifference, or study the views expressed by the vernacular Press, by publicists or by lecturers, it is impossible to avoid being struck by the strange, and at times startling, contrasts presented.

The enigmatic element is seen, not so much in the contrasts between East and West and between the ancient and the modern—though these are strikingly portrayed in the everyday life of the Japanese Capital—as in the fact that in some instances they stand apart from each other whilst in others they are mixed. In others, again, they are compounded in such a way as to bring about entirely new and unique features. What, for instance, could be more redolent of the East than the picturesque shrines and temples of Tokyo and the alfresco mode of living so noticeable in the hot summer months in the back streets and in the suburban districts? There, with windows, doors, and sliding walls wide open to let in the maximum of air, men, women, and children can be seen lying around fanning themselves, almost, and sometimes completely, divested of all clothing. In this we have the East; yet what is there more indicative of Western civilisation than the great ferro-concrete office-buildings of the Marunouchi district, with their thousands of foreign-clad business men and clerks and the modern methods which they employ? These two very definite and strangely contrasting examples are as strikingly illustrative of East and West respectively as is the sight of the slow-moving bullock-cart and the swiftly-moving two-ton motor-lorry in the streets of Tokyo illustrative of the ancient and the modern.

In these instances, the East and the ancient are seen untouched by the West and the modern. They are merely contrasts. The mixture, as apart from the compound, of all four, however, is exemplified by the two sets of clothing, the *kimono*, and the foreign-style suits, which the male office workers of Tokyo possess; by the two kinds of meals, Japanese and Western, which they eat; and by the two styles of living accommodation to which they are accustomed—the simple Japanese house, in which shoes are discarded on entry and a cushion on the floor serves as a seat, and the foreign-style office, with



its chairs and tables at which men sit with their feet shod.

One other feature remains to be emphasised, namely, the blending of East and West, ancient and modern, as opposed to the contrasts and the mixtures exemplified above. This particular feature of Tokyo is really divisible into two—the one part derived from an unsuccessful attempt to copy the modern West and the other from a successful adaptation of all that is best in modern Western art and civilisation without discarding the many excellent qualities possessed by the ancient East. The grotesque “nudes,” both in oils and in sculpture, which are unfortunately becoming increasingly popular amongst a section of Japanese artists and are given all too much prominence in Tokyo art exhibitions, may be quoted as an example of the former, whilst the new Kabukiza Theatre, with its magnificent blending of the finest ancient Japanese architecture with the most modern and scientific methods of Western construction and internal arrangement, is a good illustration of the successful combination of East and West, ancient and modern, so as to form one new and unique whole.

If it is permitted to use a simile, it may be said that Tokyo, with its sharply-defined contrasts, its curious mixtures, and its strange combinations, is like a chemical laboratory in which experiments are being conducted. To use the simplest example, two elemental gases may be taken to represent East and West or ancient and modern. Separately they stand out in contrast to each other, but they can be mixed together. The resultant mixture, however, is nothing more than a mixture and not an entirely new gas. A chemical reaction is necessary to make them change from a mere haphazard mixture to a real new substance, and the peculiar properties of the new body thus formed will depend on the means used to induce this chemical change and on the atomic proportions in which the two original elements have combined.

This simile holds good, not only in the case of such concrete examples as those quoted above—such as clothing, transport, architecture, and oil painting—but also in the abstract—in morals, in religious outlook, in politics, and in thought generally. Moreover it is applicable, in varying degrees, to Japan as a nation as well as to the capital City of Tokyo, and this should be borne in mind by anyone desirous of understanding Japan and its people and of trying to forecast the future of this island Empire. The contrasts are plain to all, but the superficial mixtures and the permanent incorporations and combinations of East and West, ancient and modern, are often hard to distinguish from one another. Nevertheless, it is of the utmost importance to distinguish between the two if each is to be seen in its proper perspective and correct deductions are to be made.

## CHAPTER III

### THE SOCIAL PROBLEM IN JAPAN

#### (PART I)

LABOUR trouble and social unrest, as we understand the terms to-day, are of very recent origin in Japan. Even so recently as twenty years ago they were virtually unknown, but to-day they are the cause of considerable anxiety to the Japanese authorities.

For a proper understanding of the situation, it is necessary first to examine the historical background and to consider conditions as they were in Japan in the early days of the second half of last century.

Up to the time of Perry's arrival in the country in 1853, demanding the opening of commercial relations with the outside world, foreign trade, so far as Japan was concerned, was practically non-existent. A handful of Dutch traders, it is true, was allowed on sufferance to live on a small island off the city of Nagasaki for trading purposes<sup>1</sup>; but, apart from this, Japan had no trade, or even diplomatic relations, with any other Western nation, and she lived a life of self-imposed seclusion.

The story of her phenomenally rapid rise to power among the nations of the world is too well known to bear repeating. It is merely mentioned here in so far as it has a bearing on her present internal situation.

One of the first steps taken by Japan on being forced out of her seclusion was to build up an army and a navy, as she realised that, without these, she might soon be driven to share the fate of so many other Eastern nations and be at the mercy of the more scientific peoples of the

<sup>1</sup> A very restricted trade was also carried out with China.

West. Arms and ammunition, ships and guns, clothing and equipment—all these necessary items for the use of her fighting forces were ordered in large quantities from abroad, as she did not then possess the means of making them for herself. It was, however, an expensive and uneconomical method of providing herself with these necessities, and it was not long before she came to realise that it would be much more advantageous, and profitable in every way, to set about taking steps to manufacture these articles for herself. Shipbuilding yards and factories were therefore constructed, and Japan started on the first stages of industrialism.

Years went by and industrial life, which had been brought into existence largely as a result of the needs of her naval and military forces, expanded and came to take on a new aspect destined to make great changes in the whole life of the people. From being a race given over almost entirely to agricultural pursuits, Japan has become, in the short period of less than half century, one of the greatest manufacturing countries in the world. Materially this is all to the good ; but, as was inevitable, it has had a deteriorating effect in many respects on the morale of her people.

Fifty years ago, feudalism had but recently been abolished. Up to that time, commerce and trade had been regarded in a very poor light, and the merchant was at the bottom of the social scale. One reason for this was that money-making was looked upon with scorn, and honour was regarded as of infinitely greater value than riches. Thus, a penniless *samurai* was held in very much higher esteem than even the wealthiest merchant. This may have been overdone, but its effect on the moral code of the people was, as can well be imagined, good. Instead of scrambling after wealth and being discontented with their lot, the people were satisfied to work their hardest and their best for those whom they served, without any thought of reward other than enough to keep them in

safety and comfort. The employers of labour, on their part, though they were stern task-masters at times, took a real interest in those who worked for them, and saw to it that they lacked nothing that they required. Knowing nothing of constitutional rights, the working classes were happy and content under this paternal despotism, much as were many of the slaves in the Southern States of America prior to the Civil War of 1860.

Although feudalism and class distinctions were abolished in 1871 after the Restoration, the feudal spirit did not die with it. The labouring classes continued to work uncomplainingly, despite their low wages ; but it was no longer for the lord of the fief to which they belonged. Instead, they had to slave and toil for the enrichment of the capitalist, who, in most cases, came from their own class, and had none of the paternal interest in their welfare that their former masters had.

In the case of the commercial classes, the merchant used to bear much the same relationship to his employees as the *daimyo* did to his retainers and to the peasant farmers working on his estates. Young men serving apprenticeships with a merchant or artisan would be at his beck and call, and would be under his direct control. As a rule, they would be provided with food and quarters in his house, and would be treated as though they were part of the family. Their financial remuneration was generally unfixed, and varied according to whether the times were good or bad. When a man came to be of marriageable age, his employer would find him a suitable wife and might even provide the young couple with a separate house and money for its running expenses ; but even when this was done the new household would remain subject to the control of the employer. Thus it came about that a strong feeling of loyalty generally was engendered between the merchant, or the artisan, and his employees, and gains and losses were shared proportionately.

In some of the country districts this system is still in force, but in towns and in the large business organisations a complete change has taken place. The smaller employers of labour, such as carpenters and bootmakers, would like it to continue, but they can no longer obtain apprentices on these terms. The younger generation prefer greater freedom of action, and object to being controlled in this way. They want a fixed salary and wish to be more independent. This is quite understandable but, at the same time, they try to have it both ways. They agitate for payment in good times and in bad, and consider that they are being treated unfairly if, owing to economic reasons, their masters have to cut down the number of employees and discharge them.

Under the old system, the normal wages of the labourers may have been smaller than they are under present conditions, but the system carried with it the assurance that, whether times were good or bad, their employers would provide for their upkeep. It is only natural, however, that if they are given a fixed salary, as at present, they cannot expect their employers to pay them when their services are no longer required. Nevertheless, the fact remains that a great many Japanese clerks and labourers fail to see this point of view, and stir up trouble against their employers accordingly. They also consider that their masters should give them plenty of notice beforehand if they are to be discharged, and that they should be given retiring allowances on discharge, though they themselves are quite prepared to quit at a moment's notice if a chance of more remunerative employment offers itself elsewhere.

Thus it will be seen that the fault does not lie entirely with the employers. The employees are very often just as much to blame. The main feature in both cases is that the old moral relationship between employers and employees no longer exists, and the old sense of mutual loyalty has gone.

Up to a point, this is a phenomenon common to nearly all nations at the present day, but it is accentuated in Japan by the fact that the transition has taken place so suddenly.

It is commonly said that social unrest is greatest when times are bad. Up to a point this is true, but it is noteworthy that, in Japan, labour agitation is generally at its worst when business is flourishing. The reason for this seems to be that, when trade is slack, employees are afraid of losing their jobs if they agitate too strongly, as they know it will be difficult to find other work. In other words, they know that their employers have the whip hand and will have no difficulty in replacing them with more docile workers. On the other hand, when business is flourishing, the demand for labour is greater than the supply, and the men know that they can force their employers to give them better wages if they threaten to leave, as the employers will be unable to find men to replace them.

So much then for labour conditions in the towns. Before turning on to the political aspect of the situation, let us see how conditions in the country districts are affected by the present tendencies. The Japanese are, after all, still largely an agricultural people, and the foundations of Japan are based on agriculture.

Owing to the ever-increasing industrialisation of Japan, a great influx from the country to the cities and towns has taken place in recent years. When trade is slack, a great many of those who have made their way to the towns to seek their fortunes return to the hamlets and villages whence they came ; but they are no longer the sturdy, hard-working country folk that they were when they left. They have become accustomed to a higher standard of living, and their habits and customs are more luxurious and, therefore, more expensive. Far from having learned to work harder, they find that their town experience has softened them and made them unfit for the long, heavy hours that an agricultural life entails. Their brothers and



sisters, who have never experienced town life, live much more cheaply than they can, and do not regard it as a hardship ; but the man who has once tasted of the comparative luxuries of urban existence, finds it very difficult to return to peasant life. As, however, he is unable to increase his income sufficiently to enable him to continue living up to the standard enjoyed by him in the towns, the only alternative is to look about for some way in which to reduce expenditure, without lowering his standard of living. The most obvious way out of the difficulty is to induce his landlord to reduce the rate of taxation on the land he is working.

The landlord, on his part, finds the ever-increasing cost of living a burden, which is just as hard for him to bear as it is for his tenants. Land, even in the country districts of Japan, is ridiculously expensive and costs very much more than land of the same quality does in England or America. The landlord is, therefore, unable to meet the wishes of his tenants, even if he would like to do so. The result is that friction arises between the two, and each comes to bear a grudge against the other.

Just as the countryman, who has been spoiled by town life, is dissatisfied with his lot when he returns to rural surroundings, so also are the university educated sons of the landlords if, on returning to their country homes, they are unable to live and dress in foreign—or, at least, semi-foreign style, such as they have been accustomed to doing during the course of their studies in the colleges or abroad. If their parents wish to satisfy their wants in this respect, there may be no way of obtaining the necessary money, other than by raising the rents of their tenants ; but this they cannot do without increasing the discontent amongst these people. Owing to the high price of land, the most profitable thing to do would be to sell what they have, but they do not like to take this step, as it entails losing the respect which, even in these days, is attached to the land-owner. They are, therefore, in a quandary, and find it



difficult to contrive means whereby they can afford to satisfy their children.

Thus it will be seen that, in town and country alike, there is an undercurrent of dissatisfaction amongst all classes ; and this is where the danger lies. It is this spirit of unrest that political agitators, who have their own axes to grind, attempt to exploit for their own purposes.

It is only in recent years that politics have been allowed to intrude into this situation. The late War is largely responsible for this political awakening, as so much was talked of the people's rights and of the doubtful blessings of democracy. In Japan, even the lowliest coolie reads his newspaper and, through the medium of the Press, he has become impregnated with the general spirit of unrest that is prevailing throughout the world at the present time. Probably he does not understand half he reads, and herein lies yet another danger, which demonstrates the truth of the old adage, " A little knowledge is a dangerous thing." What he does learn is, that the capitalists and the bureaucrats are supposed to be using him as a mere pawn in the game for their own ends, and that, therefore, he should rise up and combine with other members of the downtrodden classes, on the principle that unity is strength.

Labour organisations are a new phase in Japanese life and are still in an undeveloped state ; but they are increasing in strength yearly and are beginning to make their presence felt. Even women are joining these leagues and associations, and are forming their own unions and societies. A noticeable feature in recent May Day demonstrations held in Tokyo, and in the main commercial centres throughout the country, is the number of women taking part in the processions and the speeches made by some of them.

As in all Eastern nations, women have, until recently, been kept very much in the background in Japan ; but they too, like the men of the labouring classes, are

beginning to demand emancipation. Women, as noted elsewhere,<sup>1</sup> are now to be found in all walks of Japanese life—in business, in the medical profession, in the position of typists, in factories, and in many other kinds of work formerly considered to be for the exclusive employment of men. Many of these women are proving themselves extremely capable, and show themselves to be superior, in many respects, to their male co-workers, both in the work they turn out and in their capacity for hard work. Little wonder, therefore, that they, too, are becoming restless and are demanding emancipation.

Added to all this increasing spirit of unrest, which arises mainly from natural economic causes, is the harm done by the flood of cheap Russian and other Socialist literature, which has entered the country in recent years. These books and pamphlets are read eagerly, and the principles enunciated in them are half digested by the youths of the student class, who, like the Athenians of old, are always seeking after some new thing. The doctrines of Marx and of Lenin are devoured whole, and the alleged wonders of Socialism and Communism are spread broadcast. The Japanese, for all that people say to the contrary, are deeply emotional, and are easily stirred by writings of this kind. So much so is this the case, that foreign instructors at the Japanese universities and colleges have been known to declare that students have come to them with stories of how, in their dreams, they have seen Russians beckoning and urging them to join with them in the overthrow of capitalism and to spread the flame of revolution in Japan. These dreams are indicative, not only of a highly strung nature, but also of the danger that lies in the spread of Socialistic and inflammatory literature amongst young men of the student class, who are, in many cases, unbalanced mentally by the intensive study to which they are subjected.

The labouring classes may be dissatisfied on account of

<sup>1</sup> See page 28.

economic conditions, but they are not, in the normal course, imbued with revolutionary ideas. They are still sufficiently close to the old days of feudalism to be affected by feudalistic principles and are willing, therefore, to follow the lead of any strong personality who cares to place himself at their head. If this leader be a man who is prepared to work in the best interests of his country, he can influence the situation for good ; but the danger lies in the possibility of political visionaries, of the type just mentioned, working on their excitability and causing untold harm. Men of this type are generally fanatical, and nothing is more infectious than fanaticism when brought to work on mob psychology.

The long-haired visionary has come much into prominence in Japan in the past few years. He is to be seen in the streets and in the second-rate cafés, which profess to serve European-style meals. He may or may not be harmless, for in many cases the flowing locks and unkempt appearance are merely effected as a pose. Nevertheless, it is a pose that is indicative of an unhealthy mental outlook, and is symptomatic of the unbalanced state of mind which affords such fertile ground for the wild social theories of radical agitators and others.

It is among the Japanese student class, rather than in the ranks of labour, that advanced radical theories have made the most headway, and it is of the danger from this quarter that the authorities are particularly apprehensive. While, however, these fears are undoubtedly justified to some extent, it is open to question whether some of the steps taken to counter the danger have not been calculated to increase rather than to diminish it. On the occasion of the country-wide round-up of communistic elements in the Spring of 1928, for example, the social study groups in universities and other educational institutions, thirty-two in all, were disbanded by order of Government, several university professors suspected of radical views were forced to resign and 147 students were either

arrested or expelled. Somewhat similar steps had been taken three years previously, in 1925, the year that saw the enactment of the Peace Preservation Law.<sup>1</sup> This same repressive policy was continued down to the end of 1929 and resulted in further arrests and expulsion of students—girl students included—and the enforced retirement of several more radically inclined professors.

No doubt the authorities hoped by this means to intimidate them to such an extent that students would be frightened off indulging their curiosity for the study of this forbidden science. To some extent they may have succeeded ; but “ forbidden fruits ” are always sweetest. The main effect of the prohibition was, therefore, to urge the bolder spirits to do in secret what formerly could be done openly, while the drastic punishment, meted out to those detected, only served to arouse sympathy for the delinquents and to increase the desire of greater numbers to find out for themselves what there was in this forbidden science to make it so delectable.

It is not without significance that the many hundreds of alleged communists, rounded up in the past two or three years, have included a large proportion of university and college students. It is, moreover, a matter of no small alarm to the authorities that, whereas formerly the radically-minded students were mainly from the lesser seats of learning and were of rather inferior type, increasingly large numbers are now being found in the Imperial universities and other government institutions, and are youths of high educational and social standing.

While, however, the policy of drastic repression seems to have done more harm than good, the root of the trouble appears to lie, as it did in pre-Revolutionary Russia, in the educational system, which turns out far more men from the higher seats of learning, the universities and colleges, than can be absorbed into positions requiring men of their standard of learning. In part, the industrialists and big

<sup>1</sup> See page 78.

commercial firms and banking institutions must be held responsible for this, as they are obsessed with the diploma craze. No matter how able an applicant for a position may be, it is almost impossible for him to get himself accepted, unless he can produce a certificate of graduation. The result is that there is a wild scramble amongst parents to send their sons to university or college. Thus these seats of learning are cluttered up with youths of mediocre ability, who act as a drag on those of real talent and have little prospect of finding employment after graduation.<sup>1</sup>

What makes the matter still worse is that a very large proportion of these students—some authorities put it as high as two-thirds—come from the poorer classes. To enable them to receive this higher education, their parents are frequently forced to borrow money at high rates of interest and to mortgage such property as they may possess. In order to redeem these debts it is essential, therefore, for the sons to find employment as soon as they have graduated ; but in all too many instances employment is unobtainable. The increasingly large body of disgruntled unemployed “ intellectuals ” thus formed has brought about a serious social problem, for men of this type are a far greater menace to the existing order of society than the ordinary unemployed labourer of the working class. After many years of study and the expenditure, in many instances, of all they possess in paying for a college or university education, they feel a grievance against society and their fellow men in general for failing to provide them with positions. In this frame of mind they are easily worked on by radical propagandists and others. These are the men, if trouble ever comes,

<sup>1</sup> That the authorities are trying to rectify the matter is shown by the recent decision of the Education Office, to draw the attention of parents to the futility of “ cramming education into children ” for no purpose other than vanity. According to a Press announcement on January 11th, 1930, provincial governors have been ordered to warn parents against “ aimless higher education ” for their children.

who, owing to their superior education, become the leaders and organisers of a revolutionary movement.

In many respects they are a greater potential danger to the State than are those students who surreptitiously indulge in the study of social science. The latter may be temporarily imbued with radical theories but, provided they are not taken too seriously and are not subjected to unmerciful persecution by the authorities, their youthful enthusiasm for such theories is likely to die a natural death after a few years of experience with the stern, practical realities of life. The unemployed "intellectual," on the other hand, is a man with a definite grievance against society, a grievance that rankles more and more the longer he is out of work.

Unless a fundamental reform is carried out in the present system of education, the problem of the unemployed "intellectual" is likely to get worse rather than better. The recent instructions, on the subject of warning parents against "aimless higher education" for their children, may be regarded, therefore, as a move in the right direction. So too is the decision of the same government department to establish closer relations between university and college authorities and students' parents, and to set up employment offices with a view to checking the present growth of unemployment amongst youthful "intellectuals."

In taking such steps as these, the educational authorities have shown a breadth of vision that has, in the past, been all too often lacking. Even more are they to be commended for the decision announced at the same time, in January 1930, to drop the repressive policy of the past few years. Henceforth, instead of banning the study of radical theories, there are to be lectures on social problems, and courses are to be held for a thorough study of Marxian and similar radical doctrines. Students are to be encouraged to carry out "healthy research" in such matters and to bring a critical attitude of mind to bear on them.



For the control of radically-inclined students, arrangements are to be made for their supervision and correction instead of expelling them, and a special group of professors is to be formed to associate closely with them under wholesome conditions.

The success of this scheme will, of course, depend largely on the way it is carried out and on the type of professor employed. Marxism is a dull and heavy subject, and much of the incentive to study and imbibe it will be gone when, instead of being forbidden fruit, it becomes a compulsory subject ! On the other hand, if the students become suspicious as to the honesty of the criticisms which their instructors attempt to apply, they are likely to seek information from less desirable sources and the authorities will defeat their own aims. Nevertheless, the scheme itself is a sound one, provided it is not abused, and the authorities have done well to substitute it for the former policy of drastic repression, which was tending to create a situation fraught with dangerous possibilities for the future.

That it will eliminate student unrest entirely is too much to expect, but it is a step in the right direction, for the whole question of student unrest in Japan bears a close resemblance to its counterpart in pre-Revolutionary Russia and, therefore, requires careful handling, if it is to be prevented from developing further in the same direction. Not only, as already noted, is there the same wild rush for higher education and insufficient jobs for those who have received it. Nor is it only that the same phenomenon of universities and colleges over-crowded with poverty-stricken students is observable. There is also the same spectacle of students forced by poverty to wear old and dishevelled clothes, and to live in very second-rate boarding establishments in unhealthy, squalid surroundings on an insufficient diet of food of the poorest quality. There is, too, the same tendency towards insubordination, discontent, frequent resort to strikes, and refusal to attend

lectures. Unpopular teachers and professors are often intimidated, and in all too many cases unruly students are given their own way, whether or no their grievances are justified.

What with unduly severe official repression on the one hand and insufficient attempts to enforce discipline on the other, the problem of student unrest seems to be taking on an increasingly grave aspect. There is one bright spot however, in this otherwise gloomy picture. This is the growing popularity of healthy competitive games and outdoor sport and recreation of all kinds. The pre-Revolution student in Russia had little or no opportunities for working off his superfluous energies in healthy amusements. He was, in most cases, afforded no facilities for indulging in athletics, and he took no interest in such forms of diversion from his scholastic studies. The conditions under which he lived made him discontented, and his spare time was spent largely in brooding over his grievances, both real and imaginary, and nurturing them by participating in political debates inveighing against the existing social system, which was considered to be at the bottom of all his troubles. Both physically and mentally, therefore, he lived in an unhealthy atmosphere, which inevitably bred a spirit of revolution and revolt against society. Had it been possible to divert his thoughts and activities to healthy competition in athletic sports, the world might have been spared some of the worst horrors of the Bolshevik Revolution ; but it was not to be. It is a welcome sign that, in spite of so many resemblances between present day student unrest in Japan and similar unrest in pre-War Russia, there is this one great difference ; the Japanese student is taking rapidly and readily to outdoor sport and recreation.

Nevertheless, the Japanese authorities are frankly worried about the growing spirit of unrest in their country and are deeply concerned as to the best measures to be taken for keeping the situation under control. The



constantly changing nature of the methods adopted is as indicative of the uncertainty existing in their minds as to the line of policy best suited to attain the object in view, as it is to the conflict in opinion between the liberal-minded statesmen and those of reactionary tendencies. Repressive measures are followed by more lenient treatment, and periods of liberality are succeeded by periods of drastic repression. Works by radical writers are permitted at one time and are sternly suppressed at another. The dangers apprehended from the study of advanced social theories are sought to be overcome, to-day by the prohibition of such studies and to-morrow by appointing special "thought control" instructors in the higher seats of learning to point out the fallacies contained in these theories. A truly good example of the epigrammatic axiom, "Order. Counter-order. Disorder."

The growing realisation that such measures are, at best, but makeshift, and that the time has come to formulate a definite policy for tackling the increasingly serious problem of social unrest, was well shown, however, by the action of the Hamaguchi Cabinet as soon as it came into power. On July 9th, 1929, exactly a week after the installation of his Ministry, the new Premier announced his intention to appoint a special commission to study this question from all possible angles and, on the basis of this commission's investigations and recommendations, to draw up a policy to deal with the social problem in all its varied aspects. It is yet too early to say whether or no the proposed measures will prove adequate, but it is at least a move in the right direction that such steps have been taken.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE SOCIAL PROBLEM IN JAPAN

#### (PART II)

THE question of social unrest has, of course, a close bearing on that of internal politics. In the following chapter it is proposed to deal more specifically with the political aspect of this question, but it is perhaps pertinent at this point to refer briefly to the grant of manhood suffrage made in 1925 after several years of violent agitation. Opinion was strongly divided as to the advisability of enfranchising the masses. Those in favour of the step asserted that to give the people the vote would help to ease the situation, as it would enable them to air their grievances by constitutional means, instead of leaving them with no other alternative than resort to force and direct action. Those opposing this liberal measure, on the other hand, took the view that it could only be carried out at considerable risk, as the people were still lacking in political education. To give them the vote before they were sufficiently prepared to use it in the best interests of the State, it was contended, would be to provide them with a powerful weapon which might be dangerous if wielded wrongly. The more liberal view, however, finally won the day and the electorate was increased at one bound from 3,000,000 to close on 13,000,000.

It may have been true, as those opposed to it asserted, that the political education of the people was still insufficiently advanced ; but, as will be shown in the next chapter, the grant of manhood suffrage has had a definite effect in strengthening the hands of those who desire to see the masses improve their position by British parliamentary methods, rather than by the revolutionary

methods of Soviet Russia. To those unacquainted with Japanese psychology, however, it may seem strange that, within a few weeks of this progressive step being taken, the *Seiyukai*, one of the two principal parties in the Lower House, took what appeared to be a step in the opposite direction. The bill granting manhood suffrage was passed in March 1925 and the following month saw the appointment of General Baron Tanaka as President of the *Seiyukai*. True, the new party chieftain, on entering the political field in this way, promptly retired from the Army and substituted a frock-coat and top hat for his uniform and sword. Nevertheless, at a time when the tendency in Japan was to oppose anything even remotely savouring of bureaucracy or militarism, the action of the *Seiyukai* in inviting a military officer like Tanaka to be their President, seemed to many to be an inexplicably retrogressive move. In some respects perhaps it was ; but there is reason to believe that the motive behind it was not unlike that which, curiously enough, brought about the election of Marshal von Hindenburg to the Presidency of the German Republic at the very same moment.

That Hindenburg, whose name was still so closely associated in the minds of most people with Prussian militarism, should become the head of the German Republic could hardly have seemed more of an anomaly than that Tanaka, the former leader of the military party in Japan, should be selected to head the *Seiyukai* at a time when democratic ideals and the anti-military movement were making so much headway in the country. The explanation of these seeming anomalies, however, appears to have been much the same in each case. In Germany and Japan alike, the situation called for a strong man at the head of affairs to hold the forces of disorder in check. In the case of Japan, it is true, the *Seiyukai* were not in power at the time ; but they hoped to be shortly and they appear to have thought that, as Tanaka, if he were their President, would then become Premier, the country would

be given the strong man that it required and they themselves would gain prestige accordingly.

The *Seiyukai*, it may be mentioned, is generally regarded as the agrarian party and has always depended on the land owners and agriculturists for its main support. As Japan, in spite of the great spread of industrialism in recent years, is still primarily an agricultural country, with some 58 per cent. of her population engaged in agricultural pursuits, it follows that a large proportion of the newly enfranchised masses consists of peasantry. These are chiefly tenant farmers and peasant proprietors, who are at loggerheads with the landlords ; but generally speaking they have more interests in common with them than with their industrial and commercial brethren of the towns and cities. In years to come, no doubt, when the proletarian party movement is better understood by them, they will give their votes to proletarian candidates ; but that day has not yet arrived. In the meantime, they are more inclined to give their votes to the *Seiyukai* than to the *Minseito*, the great rival party, which is mainly supported by the industrial and commercial section of the country. The *Seiyukai* is fully alive to this, and is bent on doing all it can to ingratiate itself with the rural communities. Its proposal to transfer the land taxes from the central Government to the local financial administration is a case in point, and its unchanging policy of decentralisation and of assisting and encouraging riparian undertakings also assures it of a large measure of support from the country districts.

Nevertheless it realises that, in view of the present undercurrent of unrest throughout Japan, these things are not in themselves sufficient. For the successful outcome of its schemes it is essential to have a strong and outstanding personality at the party's head ; a man capable of becoming a real leader, not only of the party but of the whole nation ; a man able to guide the people's thoughts and actions in the right direction.

It was apparently because no such outstanding personality was to be found within the ranks of the party that the *Seiyukai* decided to invite an outsider, Baron Tanaka, to become their head. Though a soldier and a bureaucrat, he was a man of broad-minded views, possessed of considerable sagacity and ability and of striking personality and personal popularity. He had the makings of a national leader, or so the *Seiyukai* thought ; and although his military up-bringing might have been regarded as a handicap, he was assured not only of the support of the bureaucracy and of the army—both very important factors in consideration of the object in view—but also of a large number of the newly-enfranchised masses.

Feudalism was abolished less than sixty years ago in Japan, and its influence is still felt sufficiently to leave its mark on the characteristics of the Japanese. One way in which this is seen is that an outstanding personality appeals to them very much more than any political creed or dogma. They ask nothing better than to have someone who will really lead them. Part of the present unrest may be traced, in fact, to the lack of a real national leader. If such a man appears, the mass of the people will follow willingly. That, at least, is the belief of many close observers and there is plenty of evidence to support it. There were those who believed that General Tanaka would prove to be the man required, and that he would be able to check the increasing tendency towards socialism and ultra-radicalism, by directing the people's thoughts back to a more patriotic and loyal vein. It was for this reason that, in some sections of the vernacular Press, he was hailed as "the Mussolini of Japan."

Unfortunately, when Tanaka finally came into power a couple of years later, he failed to live up to the expectations of those who had marked him out as the leader for whom the nation was looking. His geniality and never-failing optimism ensured him a large measure of personal popularity and respect, but his administration was one of

the most unpopular the country has ever had and, after its sudden fall in July 1929, it was shown to have been riddled with corruption. Although he himself appears to have been free from the charge of venality, a number of his most trusted friends were proved to have betrayed the confidence he placed in them and resorted to graft on a large scale. It may well be said therefore that, far from his Premiership providing the country with a leader to guide the people's thoughts into healthier channels, it served rather to irritate the situation by these revelations of bribery and corruption in high places.

Tanaka, however, is now dead and Japan has thereby been deprived of one who, whatever his faults and failings may have been, had many fine traits in his character. The great mistake of his life was made when he forsook his military career, in which he had distinguished himself by his courage and ability, and entered politics, in which he was little more than a babe in arms at the mercy of unscrupulous political intriguers. Nevertheless, while it is an easy matter to be wise after the event, it is well to remember that there was, in 1925, plenty of apparent evidence to make even close observers imagine that Tanaka might prove the leader that the nation required. In this connection I well recall a conversation I had at the time with a friend well versed both in Japanese and Russian affairs. We were discussing the question of the growing unrest in Japan and the prospects for the future, if steps were not taken in time to prevent its spread. Recalling what had happened in Russia, this friend commented to the following effect :

“ If a man like General Tanaka could have come into power when the revolution broke out in 1917, the situation would never have got out of control. He would have had the Army at his back and, while giving way to the people's wishes in non-essential matters, he would have retained the bonds of discipline in the military forces and could have kept the situation under control. Unfortunately,



instead of a broad-minded, firm military leader like Tanaka, Russia had Kerensky, who gave way to everything that was demanded, and allowed the bonds of Army discipline to snap at the very outset. It was a mad act on his part, as it immediately allowed the situation to get out of control."

Japan has not, of course, reached the stage of open revolt. Even if ever she does so—which God forbid—she is not likely to turn against the Emperor as did the Russians. There is very little sign of any anti-dynastic movement. It is primarily against the bureaucracy and the governing classes that the spirit of discontent is directed. To compare the situation in Japan in 1925 with that which obtained in Russia in 1917 when Kerensky came into power, therefore, is perhaps misleading. Nevertheless, the comment quoted above gives food for thought. When social unrest arises there is a danger in trying to repress it by screwing down the safety valve. This may calm matters temporarily, but it is only staving off the evil hour and storing up worse trouble for the future when the inevitable storm finally breaks loose. On the other hand, it is just as criminally foolish to release all bonds of discipline as Kerensky did.

Looked at in this way, the appointment of a potential national leader like the late Baron Tanaka to head one of the two principal political parties was perhaps a sound move. It was his misfortune, rather than his fault, that the Ministry which he headed subsequently came to a sudden and somewhat inglorious end and, in certain respects, served to irritate, rather than ease, the social unrest which it had been hoped he might alleviate.

Despite Tanaka's failure to rise to the heights expected of him, it is still believed by some that a national leader who, when the time comes, will know how to give the people their head while at the same time keeping them under proper control, should be sought and that such a man can only be found in the Army. A soldier, it is



argued, will see to it that the Army retains its discipline and remains loyal. With the Army at his back he will have nothing to fear and, provided he is a man of vision and breadth of mind, he will be able to yield to the people's wishes in non-essential matters and guide their thoughts into safer and healthier channels. Some who think this way believe that the necessary qualities for national leadership are to be found in General Issei Ugaki, the present War Minister, who has already proved himself an able administrator and a man of vision and foresight with liberal tendencies.<sup>1</sup> Both the *Seiyūkai* and the *Minseitō*, the two great rival parties, are said to have striven hard to induce him to join their ranks. It is even said that he was approached at one time to accept the presidency of a Farmer-Labour Party. Be that as it may, he has held back, up to now, from entering the political ring, though he is known to have given serious consideration to the matter, and is known also to have the confidence of a number of leading statesmen and politicians. It should occasion no great surprise, therefore, if finally he decides to do so.

It may perhaps be thought that too much space has been devoted to this question of a national leader. It has, however, such a close bearing, not only on the present politico-social situation in Japan and on Japanese mentality, but also on the part played by the Army in the social make-up of the nation, that to ignore it would be to omit an important aspect of the problem under discussion.

The Army probably exerts a greater influence on the internal situation in Japan than is generally realised. It is a kind of forcing ground for the inculcation of loyalty and patriotism. Its influence as such is far-reaching. Every year, about 100,000 young men are called to the colours and, for the next eighteen months to two years, are put through a course of military training and discipline.

<sup>1</sup> Another name mentioned in this connection is that of the fine old veteran statesman and administrator, Admiral Viscount Saitō. What has been said above about the Army with regard to a national leader applies also to the Navy.

Not only are they taught to drill and manoeuvre, to shoot and to march. They are subjected also to an intensive course of instruction in loyalty and obedience to Emperor and Country. This is done through the medium of what is known as *Seishin kyōiku*, or "spiritual training."

To the foreign officer who has the good fortune to carry out a period of attachment to the Japanese Army, few things are more striking than the importance placed by the military authorities on this particular branch of the soldier's training. It is carried out in numerous ways—by lectures, by special parades, by visits to places of historical interest, and by innumerable other means ; and it is often done so subtly and skilfully, that the conscript is quite unaware that he is being subjected to this intensive propaganda.<sup>1</sup> A few men may kick over the traces ; but it is probably no exaggeration to say, that 99 per cent. of those who have served their time with the colours in Japan, return to their homes, on the completion of their period of military service, imbued with a spirit of loyalty and patriotism, which they spread unconsciously amongst their friends and relations in the towns and villages from which they come. This spirit is maintained, after leaving the Army, by the fact that, even in the most remote country districts, there are local branches of the *Zaigogun-jinkai*, the Reservists' Association, which these men join. This organisation is controlled from Tokyo, and makes a point of encouraging the reservists to retain a high standard of *esprit de corps*. The membership is said to be about three million, and the great majority of the members can be counted upon to support the forces of law and order whenever the occasion calls for it. They can be regarded as one of the country's greatest assets in combatting the evil influence of ultra-Radical teachings.

While on the subject of the Army as an instrument for inculcating and spreading the virtues of loyalty and

<sup>1</sup>For a fuller description of this *Seishin kyōiku* and all it implies, the reader may be referred to the present writer's "Military Side of Japanese Life," published by Messrs. Constable & Co., 1924.

patriotism, and disciplining the youth of the nation, attention may be drawn to another important function which it performs in the social life of the people. This is the part it plays in the democratisation of the country and in the elimination of class distinctions. The rich man, the poor man, the man of gentle birth and the coolie, each is liable to be called to the colours to serve his term as a conscript, on reaching the age of eighteen. In making conscription apply to all classes of the people it is, in fact, probable that the authorities who brought it about had a politico-social, as well as a military, object in view. Had it been confined to men of *samurai* birth, as many contended that it should be when first it was enforced in 1871, the old class distinctions which, for social and political reasons the Government of the day was so anxious to abolish, would have been perpetuated. It was only by throwing the Army open to all classes equally, that this could be avoided, and that the death-knell of the old separate warrior class was finally sounded.

The adoption of conscription just on half-a-century ago has probably had a greater influence on the social and political development of Japan than is generally realised. It has helped, as just shown, to diffuse discipline and the teaching of loyalty and patriotism amongst all sections of the people, and it has served to remove the last traces of a separate warrior class. But it has done more than this. In sounding the death-knell of the *samurai* as a distinct fighting class, it paved the way for its re-birth as a large and prosperous middle class, while by the removal of social barriers between youths serving as conscripts in barracks, a marked effect has been produced on social relationships. One such effect is noted by Yusuke Tsurume, in his discourse on the causes behind the outbreak of tenantry troubles in Japan.<sup>1</sup> "Two things helped the growing spirit of unrest among the tenants, *i.e.* the spread of

<sup>1</sup> "Contemporary Japan," published by the Japan Times Publishing Co., Tokyo, 1927.

education and the universal conscription system," he wrote. "In schools and military barracks the sons of the poor tenants for the first time realised that they were the equals of, and in many cases superior to, the sons of rich landowners, in physical as well as in mental make-up. When they returned to their villages from the military barracks, they could not look upon the sons of men, who had been under them in rank in the army, as their superiors any more." Later, after referring to the conflicts that broke out between landlords and tenants, on the collapse of "the tradition of feudalism that made the landowner seem something superior," he says :

"But they (the tenants) gradually learned that the only effectual way was combination. Collective bargaining began to be adopted as their method. Here their military training began to tell. The discipline they learned in barracks was gradually used to co-ordinate their action in the economic sphere."

Thus, while the Army, with its system of *Seishin kyōiku*, plays an important part in countering the spread of anti-social doctrines, it will be seen that in some respects it has served to encourage the outbreak of tenantry disputes, which have been such a feature of rural unrest in recent years. The friction between landlords and tenants, however, is very different in nature from the industrial strife and student unrest in the urban communities, and nowhere are the old traditions of loyalty to the Emperor and the belief in his divinity more strongly imbedded than in the sturdy peasant folk, who still form the bulk of the population.

It is probably in no small part due to the importance attached by the authorities to the military system of *Seishin kyōiku*, as an instrument for countering dangerous radical theories and doctrines, that preliminary military training has now been introduced amongst the youth of the nation. In 1925 it was introduced, partly on a voluntary and partly on a compulsory basis, in educa-

tional institutions of middle school grade and upwards. In the following year it was extended, on a voluntary basis, to those whose education had ceased on completion of the primary school course. In so far as the first of these two schemes was concerned, it was introduced nominally with the idea of counteracting the loss to national defence resulting from the reduction of the Army by four divisions on May 1st that year. The second scheme was devised primarily with the idea of cutting down the period of colour service, as those who satisfactorily carried out the course of preliminary training were, if subsequently called to the colours, promised a reduction of their conscript service to eighteen months. Some people professed to see in this move an indication of militarism, but judging by the large proportion of the stipulated curriculum devoted to the exposition of *Seishin kyōiku*, there can be little doubt that the authorities are aiming at furthering the good work done by the Army in this way, rather than at imbuing those under instruction with militaristic ideas.

Some years ago, when I was carrying out a period of attachment to the Japanese Infantry School at Chiba, I was very much impressed by a speech delivered by the Commandant on the occasion of a memorial service, which was being held in connection with the death of some of the men during an epidemic of influenza. Referring to the fact that these men had died whilst serving their country, he pointed with regret to the growing tendency of Japanese to forget the duty they owed to their country and to other people. He urged his listeners, therefore, to remember that, on their return to civil life, they should set an example to their friends and relations, by discouraging discontent and by acting up to the principle that the individual is nothing whilst the community is everything.

No doubt, when he said this, he had in mind the fact that too much consideration is apt to be given nowadays to so-called "rights," and too little to the duties that are

owed in exchange for these rights. It is a phenomenon common to all countries to-day, and is responsible for a great deal of the social unrest and discontent. The Commandant did well, therefore, in impressing this point on the officers and men who were present on that occasion.

In addition to the influence that the Army and military education in general have in counteracting the general spirit of unrest in the country, there are several organisations whose professed object is to encourage patriotism and loyalty, and to nullify the effect of ultra-Radical teachings. Some of these institutions, such as the *Seinenkai*, or Young Men's Association, do excellent work; but there are others, like the *Kokusuiikai*, the *Kokuryukai*, and the *Taikosha*, which in many cases, owing to their reactionary and super-patriotic activities, do more harm than good, as they not only interfere in matters which do not concern them, but not infrequently resort to personal violence and intimidation in an endeavour to attain their ends.

Another organisation which has, of late years, been exercising considerable influence in the realms of social politics, is the *Suiheisha*. The members of this body belong to the despised *Eta* class—people who, though Japanese, have been branded as outcasts for generations past. According to the present law, all former restrictions have been withdrawn from these people; but the majority of other Japanese still discriminate against them in matters of social intercourse. This is much resented by them; and, as they are now sufficiently powerful to take retaliatory measures, they have, on more than one occasion resorted to violence, and are a potential source of disturbance to peace and good order.

In spite of the reactionary bodies being a menace to public safety, the police are inclined to treat them with leniency. This attitude is apparently ascribable in part to the fact that the members of these societies talk loudly of patriotism, and of counteracting ultra-Radical thoughts



and movements. The authorities fear, therefore, to discourage them, despite the harm they do at other times. As, however, this super-patriotism is becoming used, more and more, as a cloak for less altruistic purposes, there have of late been signs of stricter control being enforced—a step that is all to the good. The question of these reactionary bodies will be discussed in greater detail in a later chapter.

From everything that has been written above, it will be seen that the situation in regard to social unrest in Japan is extremely complex and calls for careful handling. The old family system and its concomitant of a paternal despotism are gradually dying out; the fine spirit of sacrifice of the individual for the good of the community is becoming a thing of the past. Radical thoughts are being imported by the flood of cheap Russian literature and by the increasing contact between the people of Japan and those of Soviet Russia; and the spread of industrialism and commercialism is tending to deaden some of the finer qualities of the country at large. To a slightly less, though quite definite, degree, the cinematograph is also having a deteriorating effect on the moral code of the people, as the morals and actions of those depicted in many of the films which pour into this country from abroad, are all too often calculated to stimulate the basest passions. The super-patriots may, in some cases, help to counteract the present tendencies; but they often do more harm than good. The main bulwark against radical tendencies is the Army and the Navy, with their system of *Seishin kyōiku* and of far-reaching propaganda, inculcating loyalty and patriotism in their truest forms.

The bulk of the people are still at heart as loyal and patriotic as ever they were; but they require a leader to direct and guide their thoughts and actions into more healthy channels. Unless the situation is handled with the greatest care, the present insignificant handful of



radical visionaries may, by their very fanaticism, spread the infection amongst their countrymen. One can but hope, therefore, that the authorities will rise to the occasion and prove their ability to cope with it.

In the final analysis it is found that the spread of industrialism is at the bottom of most of the unrest. It is threatening the old established family system, which has, for centuries past, been such an outstanding feature of Japanese social life, and which is the best protection against social disturbances. Moreover, it follows naturally that the more Japan becomes industrialised the less will agricultural pursuits be, what Robertson Scott calls, "The Foundations of Japan." Industrialism is, therefore, striking at the very roots of Japanese social life. Little wonder, then, that the spirit of unrest and discontent is on the increase. This transition is, in its psychological aspect, similar to a revolution. History records no revolution—political, religious, or social—that has not been accompanied by civil disturbances. Japan can hardly expect to prove an exception to this rule, though she can take—and is taking—steps to keep the situation under control.

If the authorities show a sufficiently sympathetic attitude towards the natural aspirations of the working classes, the labour movement is not likely to prove a menace ; but if they adopt unduly repressive measures, they will merely drive them into the arms of the small, but virile, ultra-Radical group, and the result may be disastrous.

The spirit of social unrest is still mainly below the surface. With careful handling, it can be kept from breaking out into open revolt. Happily the authorities appear to realise the seriousness of the situation, and can be counted on to deal with it to the best of their ability.

# CHAPTER V

## LABOUR AND SOCIAL UNREST

### (PART I)

IN the last two chapters an attempt has been made to provide a general background to the question of social unrest in Japan. In the present chapter it is proposed to deal more specifically with this same question in its bearing on the labour or, as the Japanese more correctly call it, proletarian movement.

As already shown, it is only within the past two or three decades that Japan has been brought face to face with the question of labour unrest as a national problem. The Japanese feudal system, which was not abolished until 1871, ensured that the masses of the people were kept under strict control. Together with the family system, it helped to keep them subservient to higher authority. The seclusion policy of the Tokugawa Shogunate, which came to an end but a few years before, prevented any news of social unrest in other countries finding its way into Japan and inciting the people ; while the fact that industrial development made very little headway until after the outbreak of the war with China in 1894, ruled out the possibility of anything in the nature of industrial strife.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The total number of industrial workers in 1900 was only 120,000. To-day it is over forty times as many. The latest official figures available, those for September 1929, show a total of 4,983,657, made up as under :

	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
Factories - - - -	1,089,819	1,255,591	2,345,410
Mining - - - -	194,037	52,750	246,787
Transport and communications	451,548	39,000	490,548
Free Labourers - - -	1,473,580	427,332	1,900,912
	<hr/> 3,208,984	<hr/> 1,774,673	<hr/> 4,983,657

In the closing years of last century, however, Socialist ideas started to penetrate into Japan. An association for the study of social problems was then inaugurated and, while it is true that a *rikisha* man's union had been formed as far back as the year 1883, and that trade guilds had existed from of old, it was under Socialist influences and auspices that organised Labour made its first real appearance. This was in 1898, when a union of railway workers was formed.

In the early days of the Socialist and Labour Movement in Japan, those embracing the new doctrines were mainly "intellectuals." Manual workers were but little affected. Syndicalism and Anarchism were unknown. These were to develop later. Consequently, although the authorities ordered the suppression of a Socialist party formed in 1901, they interfered but little with the movement, until the war with Russia showed that the more advanced radicals were acting in a way that, under the circumstances, could only be regarded as unpatriotic. Oppressive measures were thereupon instituted.

It was shortly after this that Anarchist ideas were introduced into Japan for the first time, and in 1910 an alleged bomb plot was discovered by the police, a discovery which led to the execution of eleven men and a woman in January of the following year and to the imposition of life sentences on twelve others.

The result of this conspiracy was two-fold. It led the authorities to regard anything even remotely savouring of Socialism as being a danger to the State and therefore a thing to be suppressed with the greatest vigour. It led also to the Socialist movement being driven underground and therefore made more difficult to detect. Consequently, for the next few years everything was seemingly quiet, though in reality there was considerable activity going on below the surface and a class of malcontents, with a grudge against the existing order of society, was coming into being. Some indication of this activity was seen in 1918, when the Rice Riots, which resulted in 192 casualties

among the police, soldiers, and firemen, and an unknown number among civilians,<sup>1</sup> broke out, and the houses of large landlords, in no less than forty-two provinces, were attacked and burned down by infuriated peasants. Moreover, during the five or six years immediately preceding this outbreak, industrial strikes and peasant disputes, in which Socialist influence was, in some instances, discernible, gave evidence of the growing spirit of unrest among the working classes.

Just how much Socialistic influence there was in the background of these strikes and of the Rice Riots has never been quite clear. As the writer of an editorial in the *Japan Chronicle* rightly observed,<sup>2</sup> "the strikes were as spontaneous as such a rising could be, and it was discontented fishwives—another outspoken class—who began the row." On the other hand, while there is little doubt that the riots were largely an expression of the feelings of the masses towards the *navikin*, or war profiteers, who had sprung up into such prominence since 1914, there is no denying the fact that printed appeals had appeared in some places, thus indicating that some militant minority was also at work.<sup>3</sup>

Be that as it may, in the meantime, although Socialistic teaching had been banned, a Labour movement had started to develop, and liberal thinkers, realising the importance of guiding it into moderate channels, lest otherwise it might drift in too radical a direction, gave it their patronage and support. The wisdom of their action is well seen to-day ; for, while it is true that for a time a section of Japanese labour showed very radical tendencies, organised labour in Japan is now, with minor exceptions, notably moderate and in favour of constitu-

<sup>1</sup> Officially civilian casualties were placed at only 92, but there is good reason to believe that this was a very conservative estimate.

<sup>2</sup> Under date of 28th March, 1928.

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* "The Socialist and Labour Movement in Japan," a pamphlet written by an anonymous American Sociologist and published by the Kobe Chronicle Press in 1921.

tional methods. There is little doubt that this is in no small part due to the far-sighted policy of those liberal thinkers who, in the early days of the movement, gave it their help and sympathy.

These liberal thinkers, it should be noted, were mainly private individuals, men like Baron (now Viscount) Shibusawa and other influential persons of the upper classes. It was not until later that the Government authorities were forced to admit, rather grudgingly, the wisdom of encouraging the movement in any way. At the start, in fact, they held the understandable but erroneous view that, so long as labour was unorganised, it could do no serious harm, and that therefore anything in the nature of labour unions was to be discouraged, as organisation meant strength that might be directed against the Government. The fallacy of this belief, however, has been shown time and again in Japanese labour disputes during the past few years. In the majority of cases, they have been accompanied by violence only when the protests have come from workers who have little or no organisation of their own, as, for instance, in the case of the *Kyushu* miners.<sup>1</sup>

It was in 1912 that the Labour movement first showed signs of real development. In that year was formed the *Yu-ai Kai* (Labour Friendly Society) which, eight years later, under the guidance of Bunji Suzuki, sometimes called the Samuel Gompers of Japan, was to develop into the Japanese Federation of Labour. At the outset, owing to the Government's suspicious attitude toward Labour, this organisation considered it inadvisable to declare itself as an actual labour union. It attempted, however, to mediate between workers and employers in

<sup>1</sup> It may be of interest to compare this with the observations of Mr. Campbell at the 11th Congress of the British Communist Party held in Leeds on 1st December, 1929. He saw great hope, he said, in the growing proportion of the unorganised to the organised workers, "which means that, as the strike wave develops, a greater proportion of the workers will be outside the control of the reformist trade-union machine."

strikes, and gave a certain measure of moral support to workers generally.

The first big strike occurred in the year that the *Yu-ai Kai* was formed and, with the outbreak of the World War in 1914, industrial unrest increased by leaps and bounds, helped on, as it was, by the rise in the cost of living and the discontent caused by the sight of numberless profiteers, who flaunted their wealth in the most extravagant fashion.

By 1918, the situation had developed in such a way that the Rice Riots were but the inevitable outcome of wrought up feelings. Barely had they subsided than a rapid succession of strikes, many of which were accompanied by violence and necessitated the calling out of troops for their suppression, broke out. The outbreak of these troubles, following as they did so soon after the Russian Revolution, attracted the attention of Japanese students and "intellectuals" to the study of social science and, taking advantage of the general unrest, the Socialists and malcontents who, by the stern measures adopted after the discovery of the bomb conspiracy in 1910, had been forced to work in secret, emerged once more and added to the confusion. Social study groups were formed in all the higher seats of learning, and Marx, whose works had hitherto been banned from publication in Japan but were now allowed for the first time to appear on sale, became the popular Divinity of the day.

The saner Labour elements attempted to keep their fellow workers from going over to the Left; but, thanks to the incitement of the re-emerged socialists, anarchists, and syndicalists, and of the students and college professors whom they encouraged in their study of social science, the Japanese Labour movement during the next few years showed increasingly radical tendencies. As for the bourgeois elements which incited the workers, they preferred to see unsuccessful strikes, for they wished to put their social theories to the test and they knew that defeat



helped to intensify the rebellious spirit of the workers. For this same reason, they did their best to dissuade the strikers from joining or forming trade unions, as they wished to discourage compromise and wanted to gain their ends by force. Direct action was therefore supported and parliamentary politics strongly repudiated.

Fortunately, a number of circumstances arose about this time to bring the workers back to their senses and prevent matters going too far. First, in order of sequence, was the ending of the War-time period of prosperity. During the War boom the workers held the whip hand. It gave them economic strength as well as a consciousness of power. They knew that their employers were so anxious to complete their contracts, in order to obtain and carry out fresh orders, that they were prepared to give almost any terms to their employees for the sake of getting the work done. The workers, in fact, knew they were indispensable and that their services were in great demand. They could afford, therefore, to be unruly and dictatorial. In the slump and general depression that followed, however, the boot was on the other foot. Retrenchment became the order of the day, staffs were cut down to the barest minimum, and unemployment loomed up as the only prospect for many tens of thousands. Fear of the future, it is said, makes for counsels of prudence and stifles all tendency to self-assertion. Generally speaking it was so in this case. The depression which followed the boom strengthened the hands of the capitalists and made the workers much less inclined for strikes on frivolous pretexts. Saner counsels prevailed, and strikers were made to see that violence only invited suppression and brought no advantage to those indulging in it. Increasing bitterness, however, was a marked feature of most of the strikes that occurred subsequently. There were, for example, the big dockyard strikes of 1919 and 1921. These were far from being "prosperity" strikes, and although the Kawasaki Dockyard strike of 1919 was free



from violence and ended in mutual compromise, the strikes conducted by the Kawasaki and Mitsubishi dockers two years later were of a far more serious nature, the strikers demanding a syndicalist management of the workshops.<sup>1</sup>

It may be said, in fact, that Japanese Labour entered upon a new epoch of energetic action in 1919, with syndicalism as its guiding principle. The weapon was direct action and the goal was the control of industry. This phase lasted about three years and was marked by an attempt to organise a Socialist Union, the sponsors including social democrats, syndicalists and anarchistic elements. The attempt, however, proved a failure, as police broke up the inauguration meeting, which was held at the Y.M.C.A. Hall in Tokyo on 10th December, 1920, and arrested a number of those present.

The idea of Syndicalism gradually weakened, and by 1922 it had been supplanted by that of Communism. In that year, the representatives of 136 different labour unions met at Osaka for a national conference. At this gathering there arose a sharp conflict of opinions between the syndicalist and communistic groups. The meeting finally broke up in disorder, but the victory may be said to have gone to the communistic elements.

Their victory, however, was short-lived, for in June the following year a number of the more radical leaders were arrested while laying plans in secret for the formation of a Communist party. This was the first blow. A second came soon after. In the confusion that followed the great earthquake three months later, about 1300 socialists were seized and several of the most prominent anarchists and radicals, who had hitherto been permitted to remain at liberty, were put to death by reactionaries. As a result, the group which had been so strongly opposing parlia-

<sup>1</sup> For a fuller account of these and other strikes during this period, the reader may be referred to Morgan Young's "Japan Under Taisho Tenno." George Allen & Co. 1928.

mentary Government, and had advocated revolution rather than evolution, practically ceased to exist. A source of great uneasiness to the authorities was thereby removed. True, there was a danger that, by the very circumstances of their deaths, they might be regarded as martyrs to the cause (as indeed they are regarded by some to this day), and in death be far more dangerous than ever they were while alive. Fortunately, however, two other events occurred soon after to help the cause of those who wished to keep the Labour movement to the paths of Constitutionalism. The first of these was the success of the British Labour Party in coming into power. The influence that this had on the Japanese Labour movement can hardly be exaggerated. It was a clear demonstration of what Labour could achieve by constitutional methods, and it stimulated the leaders of the Japanese movement to follow the lead of their fellow-workers in England. The Russian model was thereupon discarded, and from that time on the British example is the one that has been followed in the main.

If the formation of a Labour Cabinet in England served to encourage Japanese Labour to follow constitutional methods, the passage of the Universal Manhood Suffrage Bill through the Japanese Diet in 1925 made their dream of emulating the British example assume more concrete form and enter into the realm of practical politics. While the 3,000,000 Japanese who had hitherto monopolised the right to vote might include a certain proportion of men sympathetic to Labour, they all belonged to the so-called "propertied classes." They could never, therefore, be capable of forming a real Labour Party in the Diet. With the enfranchisement of 10,000,000 members of the non-propertied or proletarian class, however, the question of forming such a party at once became a practical proposition. The success of the British Labour Party and the granting of the franchise to all males over 25 years of age, irrespective of any property qualifications, may therefore

be regarded as the two main factors in leading the bulk of Japanese industrial labour to turn definitely to the path of constitutionalism and to give up all idea of seeking to attain their ends by revolutionary methods.

While, however, Japanese industrial labour has now almost unanimously adopted the slogan of "Evolution, not Revolution," there are not lacking those among the newly-enfranchised proletariat who still look to Marx and the Third International as their models.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, while it is true that the authorities refuse to tolerate the existence of a Communist Party in Japan, small but virile groups of advanced radical irreconcilables have, on three separate occasions, established such a party in secret. It was in 1922 that the influence of the Third International was formally implanted in Japan, and three times since has the party, then in process of formation for the first time, been suppressed. The arrest of the leading spirits and the death meted out to others in 1923, as already noted, put an end to the movement for the time being, while the country-wide round-ups of Communist suspects, in March 1928 and April 1929 respectively, exposed the beginnings of a new Communist Party in each case and brought about its prompt suppression.

There is, however, a marked difference between the still-born Communist Party of 1923 and those prosecuted in 1928 and 1929. This difference is well brought out by an article on Communism in Japan from the pen of Mr. Katsumaro Akamatsu, in the December 1929 issue of *Kaizo* ("Reconstruction"), a magazine largely devoted to social and political affairs. In this, after noting the changes in leadership, he says: "Few students, and no women at all, took part in the older party, whereas many students have participated in the new one, which also includes not a few ladies among its membership. While

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Matsuoka, General-Secretary of the Japanese Federation of Labour, speaking in November 1927 on the Japanese Labour movement, referred to the members of the Printers' Union as "the only workers loyal to anarchy."

the former was composed mainly of veteran Socialist agitators, the members of the latter are largely new men and women." Elsewhere in the same article, he says of the Japanese Communist movement itself, that it is "getting more and more idealised and formularised. In other words, the movement has become one of students or young men and women ; it is diverging increasingly from the practical fighting line, so that it is coming more under the surveillance of the Minister of Education than that of the Home Minister. Their sphere of action is passing from the factories, mines and agrarian villages to the schools and colleges." <sup>1</sup>

In a way, this change must be considered as good in so far as its bearing on the discontent of the masses is concerned. The old leaders of the movement were men of practical ability, well versed in the matter of exploiting social agitations. The new leaders are mainly theorists pure and simple, obsessed with "revolutionary formula regardless of the objective situation of affairs and the practical values of its proposed measures." The party is, in consequence of this, as Mr. Akamatsu shows, "too idealistic for the proletarian mass to follow its lead or to achieve a sustained mass development. These people who think of the morrow's bread, and care about the living of their wives and children, are afraid of unemployment and cannot therefore agree to burn up their all at its bidding. Hence it is, that those who sympathise with the Communist Party and jump into its ranks are mostly simple-minded people, who do not care much about actual life and interests. It is also natural that young students should be more eager to cast in their lot with the party and that its views and dreams should appeal especially to professors in the ivory tower and inexperienced sons and daughters of well-to-do people."

It is because of this increasing trend from the practical to the theoretical that the more practical-minded men,

<sup>1</sup> Translated in the *Japan Chronicle* of 28th November, 1929.

who formerly gave the movement their support, are withdrawing from it, while their place is being taken by impractical idealists.

The question is often asked: "Is there any Soviet money behind this movement?" On this point, opinions, even in official circles, differ. Some believe there is; others consider it unlikely. Certain it is that no proof of financial assistance, unless possibly on a very small scale, has been forthcoming up to now, though it is known that a number of the Japanese Communist leaders have been trained at the Communist University in Moscow. Generally speaking, it is now considered that the Communist movement in Japan has its origins in the social conditions within the country, a home product reared in the national soil and not an imported article from abroad. While, therefore, the party has now been suppressed for a third time, the authorities are frank in admitting that they do not feel at ease. From this it may be inferred that the social conditions which gave rise to the party remain unaltered.

While, however, it may be true that the Communist movement in Japan is largely indigenous to the soil, it is perhaps not out of place at this point to recall a conversation I had with a well-known figure in the Japanese Labour movement towards the end of 1927. This informant, whose name must remain anonymous, stated quite frankly that active propaganda was, at that time, being carried out constantly among the labour classes by a certain unofficial member of the Soviet Embassy in Tokyo. This individual, as he put it, was the real representative of the Moscow Government in Japan, while the Ambassador was merely a figurehead or "smoke-screen."

The man who told me this was well qualified to know the inside facts, and there is no reason to doubt his word. He himself is a moderate, and is neither so conservative as Bunji Suzuki and the Right-Wing Labour leaders, nor so radical in his views as those of the Left Wing. Rather

does he proclaim himself to be a disciple of the Sydney Webb school of thought, who cares not whether his country remains a monarchy or becomes a republic, so long as the will of the people is respected and law, order, and justice are maintained. He is, however, heart and soul against revolutionary and Communistic teachings, and for that reason he spoke with feeling against the activities of this "real representative of the Moscow Government" and against those bourgeoisie professors and students who are trying to exploit the discontent of the labour classes in Japan.

That many of his countrymen are of a similar way of thinking there can be little doubt. The great mass of the Japanese people, however, would probably regard the suggestion of a republican form of government, under any circumstances whatever, as little short of heresy, while those who are definitely anti-dynastic are few indeed. Nevertheless, that small but active minority can do much harm, and it is due to their realisation of the danger to be apprehended from this source that the Government, in 1925, enacted the Peace Preservation Law and, three years later, revised it in such a way as to provide for even more drastic punishment of those guilty of violating it. Under this law it is forbidden to organise, join, or induce others to join any society which aims at altering the national constitution or of repudiating the system of private property. In its original form, the maximum penalty for violators of this law was imprisonment for 10 years, but by the revision of 1928 the crime in question was made punishable by death.

From the British standpoint this law may seem unduly draconic, and there are many Japanese who hold a similar view. Particularly is criticism levelled at the fact that protection of the national polity and protection of private property have been linked together, as though they were of equal importance. Nevertheless, wise or foolish though the country's legislators may have been in passing this



law, there are many liberal-minded Japanese who are equally apprehensive of danger from the small but active anti-dynastic minority. It is, in fact, due to this apprehension that men like Bunji Suzuki and his followers are so strongly opposed to co-operating with those elements of the proletarian movement which include Communistic and other radical thinkers in their numbers. Thus it comes about that trade unionism, and the proletarian movement in general, are split into numerous factions. Some of these refuse radicals to their membership, while others accept them gladly or conditionally. This fact, in conjunction with the prevalence of local jealousies and of rivalries amongst ambitious leaders, renders cohesion and co-operation on a national scale virtually impossible. Attempts, mostly ineffectual, to combine in order to form a united front, are continually being made; but so antagonistic are many of these groups and factions to one another, that in prefectural and general elections their candidates are frequently found pitted against each other. This, of course, results in splitting the proletarian vote and playing into the hands of candidates representing the old-established political parties. A house divided against itself cannot stand, and with Labour divided in this way the whole proletarian movement is weakened. The prospects of a large and powerful Labour or Proletarian Party coming into existence are therefore few indeed, unless the various component parts behind the movement can agree to sink their differences and combine for the common good.

How great is this lack of cohesion can perhaps best be illustrated by a glance at the development of the proletarian movement during the past five years. As already explained, it was not until the passage of the Universal Manhood Suffrage Bill in March 1925 that the formation of a proletarian party became a practical proposition. With the sudden enfranchisement of 10,000,000 additional males, all belonging to the non-propertied classes, how-



ever, steps were straightway taken to form a representative party. The inauguration ceremony took place on December 1st the same year ; but, three hours after its formation, the new party was dissolved by order of the Government on the grounds that the platform drawn up by it was too radical. This view was not confined only to the Government, for Bunji Suzuki and the Japanese Federation of Labour, which had intended originally to join the new party, had withdrawn their support on these same grounds shortly before its formation, and refused to have anything to do with it.

Three months went by ; then another attempt was made, the *Rōdō Nōmintō*, or Labour-Peasant Party, from which all known radicals were barred (but which has since become the most radical political organisation of all), coming into existence on 5th March, 1926. The radicals, however, angered by their treatment, promptly set to work to undermine the allegiance of the less enthusiastic supporters. As a result, the Japan Peasants' Union, a very important element, seceded. With the help of their radical seducers, they thereupon formed the *Nihon Nōmintō* or Japan Peasant Party. This was on October 17th of the same year.

Then followed further disruption. The Japanese Federation of Labour, which formed the backbone of the Labour-Peasant Party, split in two, the Right Wing forming the *Shakai Minshūtō*, or Social-Democratic Party, while four days later (December 9th, 1926), the Left Wing elements organised yet another party, known as the *Nippon Rōnōtō*, or Japan Labour-Peasant Party. Attempts were made subsequently to effect re-union, but always without success, the *Shakai Minshūtō*, with Suzuki and the conservative residue of the Japanese Federation of Labour, being insistent that, so far as they themselves were concerned, no reunion was possible until or unless all the radical elements of those proposing amalgamation had been expelled. Far from there being

any reunion, the tendency was in the direction of further disunion, the farmers' guilds, which were formerly the chief constituents of the *Nihon Rōnōtō*, going to the Left, while the leaders of that party continued a Right-Wing policy.

This was the position when, in February 1928, the first general election under the new Manhood Suffrage Law was held, the strength of these four proletarian parties being estimated at that time to be roughly as under :

<i>Shakai Minshūtō</i>	-	-	165,000
<i>Nihon Nōmintō</i>	-	-	96,000
<i>Rōdō Nōmintō</i>	-	-	85,000
<i>Nihon Rōnōtō</i>	-	-	25,000

In addition to these four, there was also a number of smaller local proletarian parties. One of these, the *Kyūshū Minkentō*, as it so happened, succeeded in having one of its candidates returned to the Diet. Even including these local parties, however, the aggregate membership of all the proletarian groups was estimated at little more than 400,000. Even if they had all combined, therefore, in order to form one united whole, they would still have been far behind the two great political parties, the *Seiyukai* and the *Minseito*, which, under frequently changing names, have alternated between the Government and Opposition almost since the Imperial Diet first came into being forty years ago. In actual fact, the total number of votes polled between all the proletarian candidates in the field was 476,440 out of a total number of valid votes of 9,585,129.

On the average number of votes per successful candidate this should have secured them about 15 seats in the House. Actually, however, they won only eight.<sup>1</sup> This was in no small part due to the various groups pitting their candidates against one another, though government interference in the elections (the subsequent revelation of

<sup>1</sup> *Shakai Minshūtō*, 4 ; *Rōdō Nōmintō*, 2 ; *Nihon Rōnōtō*, 1 ; *Kyūshū Minkentō*, 1.

which brought about the forced resignation of Dr. Suzuki, the Home Minister), also played its part.

The fact, however, that in this first trial of strength the newly created proletarian parties were able to return even as many as eight members to the Diet, is not without significance, when it is remembered that the British Labour Party, which was destined to form a Cabinet of its own barely thirty years later, entered Parliament for the first time in 1892 with only two members. Little could it have been foreseen then, how soon Labour was to rise to power in England, for one of these two members, the late Mr. Keir Hardie, made himself ridiculous from the very outset by allowing his East-End constituents to drive him to Westminster in a two-horse brake with a bugler on the box, while he himself wore a workman's cloth cap. Very different to this was the quiet, dignified behaviour of the first Japanese proletarian members, though curiously enough they too, like Keir Hardie, called forth censure from some of their opponents on account of their failure to adopt the customary Japanese sartorial standard of frock-coat and top-hat on all and every occasion.

The dignified bearing of the proletarian members in the Diet since their entry has compared very favourably with the unseemly behaviour in which many members of the older parties are wont to indulge. The good impression created thereby will doubtless have its effect in winning them support from many who previously hesitated to vote for untried men, though this will count for little so long as the various component parts of the proletarian movement continue to fight and bicker among themselves.

This inability to compose their own internal differences has been as conspicuous since the elections of 1928 as it was during the three preceding years. It proved disastrous to them in the elections of 1930.<sup>1</sup> How unstable, in fact,

<sup>1</sup> Although the total number of votes polled by proletarian candidates in the 1930 elections increased to 523,888, only five seats were secured. *Shakai Minshūtō*, 2; *Taishūtō*, 2; *Rōnōtō*, 1. In proportion to the total of votes cast, they should have secured as many as twenty-three.

has been the state of Japanese proletarian politics since the elections of 1928 is evidenced by the changes that have taken place in the meantime. Of the five principal proletarian parties already mentioned, one only remains. This is the *Shakai Minshūtō*, the Social-Democrats, headed by Professor Abé and Bunji Suzuki. The *Rōdō Nōmintō*, compendiously known as the *Rōnōtō*, was dissolved in April 1928, by order of the Government, on account of its alleged Communistic connections, following a country-wide round-up of radicals in the previous month. The *Nihon Nōmintō* and the *Nihon Rōnōtō* dissolved in December the same year of their own accord and, with the exception of certain seceders who opposed their action, amalgamated, together with a number of smaller local groups, to form a so-called centre bloc under the name of *Nihon Taishūtō*, or Japan Masses' Party. The bulk of the *Kyūshū Minkentō* were likewise absorbed into this new body at the time of its formation and have ceased to remain as an independent organisation.

On the surface, these fusions and amalgamations may appear to indicate a greater degree of cohesion than existed formerly. A closer examination, however, fails to confirm that this is so, and even the *Shakai Minshūtō*, the one seemingly stable party amongst the proletarians, has been rent and torn asunder by discord more than once during the past year or so. This breach in their ranks was clearly seen in December 1928 when, by way of celebrating the visit of M. Albert Thomas to Japan, some of the leaders of the proletarian movement exerted themselves to bring about an amalgamation of all the various groups in order to form a united front. When the proposal to do so was brought up for discussion by the *Shakai Minshūtō*, a violent controversy arose between its Eastern and Western Japan sections. The latter advocated joining the proposed new party on the grounds that all Communistic elements were to be excluded from it. The Eastern Japan

section, on the other hand, maintained that, despite the avowedly anti-Communist complexion of the proposed party, some of its leaders were under the influence of the Third International, even though their organisations did not receive instructions from it. Those opposing the proposal finally won the day. The new party was formed, therefore, without the participation of the *Shakai Minshūtō*, and took on the name of *Nihon Taishūtō*.

As noted elsewhere, it was into this new organisation that the *Nihon Nōmintō* and *Nihon Rōnōtō* were merged. Even in their case, however, the decision to do so was not unanimous. A number of the *Nihon Rōnōtō* members seceded rather than join it, as they distrusted the *bonâ fides* of some of the leaders as much as, and for similar reason as, the Eastern Japan section of the *Shakai Minshūtō*. It only remains to add that the *Nihon Taishūtō*, in spite of the high hopes at the time of its birth, has shown itself to be little, if any, more stable than its predecessors, as several splits have taken place within its ranks since it came into being.

To return, however, to the *Shakai Minshūtō*. Although the division of opinion revealed in its ranks, when the question of joining the *Nihon Taishūtō* was mooted, did not bring about an open rupture there and then, increasing evidence of internal discord was conspicuous throughout 1929 and a serious split occurred in December of that year.<sup>1</sup> The main body of the organisation, however, still remains intact and continues to operate as the Right Wing of the proletarian movement, while the *Nihon Taishūtō* is professedly a centre bloc, though it contains certain leftish elements. The proletarian battle-front is now, therefore, divided between three main parties, Right, Centre, and Left Wing respectively, for in November 1929

<sup>1</sup> The seceders formed themselves into a new proletarian party on January 15th 1930 under the name of *Zenkoku Minshūtō* (All Japan Democratic Party.) The same day saw the birth of yet another party, the *Musan Taishūtō*, or Proletarian People's Party, composed of seceders from the *Nippon Taishūtō*.

the old *Rōnōtō*, which had been dissolved by Government order in April 1928 on account of its radical connections, was finally re-established after several unsuccessful attempts, (each of which had been frustrated by the authorities), to do so.

Though no more than a *résumé* of the main splits and fusions, dissolutions and amalgamations, has been given, it should be clear from what has been written above that the proletarian movement is still in a state of flux. It should be clear, too, that the Japanese non-propertied classes represented in these parties are of all shades, grading from Die-Hard conservatives (to whom the left-wingers refer contemptuously as "camouflaged bourgeoisies," and whom the reactionaries call "disguised Communists") to revolutionary radicals. It will also be seen that, while urban Labour is largely inclined to the Right Wing, it is among the peasantry, hitherto the most conservative section of the populace, that the Left Wing finds its main support. The reason for this will be shown later. It may not be out of place to observe at this point, however, that it is perhaps just as well that the position is not reversed ; for the real danger of revolution in any country comes from urban labour rather than from the peasantry. Marxian doctrines have little or no appeal to the tillers of the soil. All that rural labour wants is a square deal and the right to live. They may rise against oppressive landlords in order to obtain these desiderata, if they are not to be obtained by other means ; but, rooted as they are to the soil, they have no desire to seize the reins of government or to try putting into practice economic theories of their own. Rather do they prefer, having gained their ends, to settle down to their old conservative ways and to live on in peace and quiet. The Russian Bolshevics soon learned the truth of this to their sorrow, and Lenin was, consequently, always careful to avoid referring to Socialism and Marxism when dealing with the farmers, as he was well aware that such doctrines,

though attractive to city workers, appeal but little to agrarian communities. It is by no means lacking in significance that the great thorn in the flesh of Stalin and his co-workers in Moscow at the present time is still the farmer.



## CHAPTER VI

### LABOUR AND SOCIAL UNREST

#### (PART II)

IN speaking of the Japanese proletarian parties, it must not be imagined that, even if they were all combined into one united whole, they would have anything like the numerical strength or influence of the Labour Party in England. Organised labour, which provides the backbone of the British Labour Party, is still in its infancy in Japan. In the case of industrial labour, barely 6 % of the workers are organised. Amongst the peasantry the percentage is but little higher.

The total number of industrial workers is put at 4,983,000. Of these, more than one million and three-quarters are women who are, as yet, almost entirely lacking in organisations of their own. Of the three million odd males, scarcely one-tenth are organised. The actual figures are given as 321,125, including some 13,000 women. These are split up into no less than 542 unions. Of this number, 241 with a total membership of 152,885 are divided among 46 different federations. The remaining 301 unions, with 168,240 members, are entirely independent.<sup>1</sup>

These figures, which are the latest available, should suffice to show that little headway has so far been made in the way of organised labour. Moreover, many of these organisations lead a precarious existence and, due mainly to personal struggles and contest for leadership, are continually splitting and amalgamating. Obviously,

<sup>1</sup> Official statistics for June 1929 compiled by the Social Bureau of the Home Office. The numbers are, of course, changing constantly.

therefore, the influence of most of them is not very great. As one official put it when interrogated on the matter, their activities are not yet able to affect the existing order of society. Even the three largest federations—the Japan Seamen's Union, the Federation of Naval Workers with six unions, and the Japanese Federation of Labour with 46 unions—have total memberships of only 82,000, 42,000 and 33,000 respectively. Compare this state of affairs with that of the British Labour Party, which depends on the great labour unions of the country, with a total membership of close on five millions, for its main support. It will be seen how different are the conditions. In point of numbers, the industries in which the workers have made the greatest advance in organising themselves are the services of communications and engineering. Each of these provides over 100,000 members to the labour guilds and unions. The miners, on the other hand, have shown the least progress, only about 6000 out of a total of close on 300,000 being organised. Workers employed in the silk and cotton spinning industries are likewise particularly backward in the organisation movement, less than 20,000 of the 1,000,000 odd employees being members of unions. This is said to be primarily due to the large proportion of girl operatives.

One of the principal reasons for the slow development of organised labour in Japan, however, is that the right of collective bargaining is not yet recognised by law. Prior, in fact, to 1926, incitement to strike was punishable by imprisonment and a fine. Labour unions, therefore, have no legal status, though they have been allowed to exist on sufferance since 1919. With the rapid extension of industrialism and the growing importance of the labour question in general, however, it has been recognised for some time past that legislation of some kind or another for the legal recognition and control of these unions is becoming increasingly desirable. Several bills with this

object in view have been drafted in recent years for consideration by the Diet, but for various reasons they have failed to obtain the necessary approval. The probability is, however, that a labour union law of sorts will be passed before long ; but until this is done, there is little likelihood of any great development in Japanese trade-unionism, as the position of unions is too precarious.

In this connection, the following passage from the *Japan Year Book* (1930 edition) is of interest :

“ Labour unions in Japan do not owe their origin to normal development but the exigency of disputes between labour and capital, and they still lack solid basis. They are essentially an expedient for making an effective stand against exploitation and generally for getting up a strike, and once an immediate object has been attained an organisation sinks into insignificance. Weak in discipline and devoid of funds, the labour unions of Japan are still incoherent bodies and they will take time before they can grow to be a power in the machinery of the State.”

That the Japanese labour unions “ still lack solid basis ” is primarily due to the absence of a trade union law. Once such a law is passed, therefore, not only is there likely to be a considerable development in the union movement but in the proletarian movement as well, for organised labour is more likely to give its support to the proletarian parties than to the old-established political factions.

While, however, industrial labour is likely to play an increasingly prominent part in the politico-social life of the country, it must be remembered that more than 50 per cent of the Japanese population is still engaged in agriculture.<sup>1</sup> The peasants and farmers are a far more important factor, therefore, in Japan than they are in Great Britain. Like their brethren in the factories and the mines, however, the bulk of the peasantry is still

<sup>1</sup> Of the 27,000,000 wage-earners in Japan, 58% are engaged in agriculture, forestry, and in the fisheries, while only 23% are industrial workers and artisans.

unorganised and, with the exception of the militant *Nihon Nōmin Kumiai* (Japan Farmers' Guild) and the *Zen Nihon Nōmin Dōmei* (All Japan Peasants' League), the majority of the organisations are small and of local influence only. Moreover, like the industrial unions they are lacking in funds and, like them too, they lack cohesion and are constantly splitting and amalgamating.

Even the two principal bodies mentioned above are in a constant state of flux. The Farmers' Guild, for example, came into being seven years ago with a membership of only fourteen, and within 5 years had increased its numbers to nearly 60,000 divided amongst 957 branches; yet to-day it has only 14,000 members and 465 branches. In like manner, the Peasants' League, which boasted a membership of 20,000 at the close of 1927, had only 6000 members at the end of 1929.

The big drop in the membership of these two organisations, however, is not entirely due to those causes which make for so much change in the size and constitution of the majority of labour and peasant guilds and unions. It is due mainly to the dissolution of a large number of their constituent groups, which belonged to the *Rōdō Nōmintō*, the proletarian party dissolved by order in the Spring of 1928 on account of its Communist connections.

That the organisation of the peasantry is making good progress, however, is evidenced by the fact that, whereas in 1918 there were only 376 tenants' guilds in existence, they had risen to 4295, with a total membership of 327,900, by 1929. They were slightly stronger, therefore, numerically than the industrial unions, and accounted for roughly 8 per cent of the total peasantry. Between rural and urban Labour, however, there is no real point of common interest, unless it be class consciousness which, in reality, barely exists as yet in Japan. Consequently, there is but little co-operation between the two. When doctrinaire Socialists talk of the common interests of all workers and attempt to stir up class warfare in Japan, they

overlook the fundamental fact that the price of rice, the staple food of the Japanese people, is in itself sufficient to turn the one against the other, for a rise or fall has a diametrically opposite effect on each. A rise causes the peasants and landlords to rejoice and bury their grievances accordingly, while on urban Labour the effect is reversed. Similarly, a fall in price plunges the rural workers into despair and fans their discontent, while urban Labour rejoices and temporarily composes its differences.

But what, it may be asked, is the attitude of the general public toward the Labour movement? If the vernacular Press is anything to go by, it is extremely sympathetic; and in this particular instance, though it is perhaps rather in advance of it, there is reason to believe that the Press reflects the trend of public opinion. The Public is strongly anti-Communist and averse to revolutionary methods, but it looks with sympathy on the Labour cause; and if only Labour, as a political force, could manage to compose its differences and keep its more radical elements under control, the chances are that it would soon secure strong support from the country at large. The people are becoming tired of the existing parties in the Diet, which are corrupt and venal and are based on personalities rather than on principles. They would therefore welcome the appearance of a strong, clear-principled party, which could be relied upon to purge the country's politics of its many evil practices and bring in a cleaner, healthier atmosphere all round. In this, then, lies Labour's great chance. The next few years should suffice to show whether they will seize it and avail themselves of this Heaven-sent opportunity, or whether they too will fall into the same errors and adopt the same corrupt practices as the old-established parties.

Having now dealt with the Japanese Labour movement in a general way, it is possible to particularise rather more. Rural and urban labour, as we have seen, have little in

common, and organised labour, whether in town or country, is still more or less in its infancy and lacking in cohesion. Urban labour, thanks to a number of circumstances already enumerated, is now following England rather than Russia as its model, while rural labour, though opposed to Marxian doctrines, is far more radical. These facts, while important to remember, are in the nature of generalities and, like all generalities, require certain modifications, if a proper perspective is to be obtained. Other factors must, therefore, be considered.

The Communistic activities of certain college professors and students have already been noted at some length. No more need therefore be said on this matter. Another class, however, which offers a serious social problem in Japan is the *Eta* or Outcast Class. Ethnologically and physically there is no difference between them and the rest of their countrymen, and in the eyes of the Law they have, since 1871, been equal in all respects with the other citizens of Japan. In actual practice, however, they are socially ostracised and discriminated against to such an extent that in self-defence they are now banding together for the purpose of righting their grievances. Amongst them there are reported to be not a few who are ready, at any moment, to indulge in radical activities aiming at the overthrow of the existing state of society. In the Rice Riots of 1918 they are said to have taken an active part, especially in south-western Japan, where they are mainly concentrated, and on several occasions since then, pitched battles, resulting in a number of fatalities, have been fought between them and those by whom they consider themselves to have been wronged.

Opinions vary as to their total strength, the official figure being about 1,200,000 while the *Suiheisha*, the central organisation of the outcasts, with a membership of 200,000, claims a total of two-and-a-half times that number. In view of the fact that there were 960,000 of these *Eta*, or Special Class as they are called, in 1870, and



that the population of Japan in general has roughly doubled since then, the probability is that they now number between one-and-a-half and two million.

According to the most reliable information available, it is only a small portion of the whole—about 20,000 in all—that is radical ; but this radical section is said to be imbued with the idea that, as it was the oppressed Jews of Russia who destroyed the Czarist *régime* and set up the Soviet, so too must the oppressed class of Japan upset the existing social order and seize the reins of government by forceful means whenever an opportunity presents itself.

It is perhaps significant that the Left Wing of Japanese Labour is openly sympathetic with the so-called *Suiheisha* movement for the social emancipation of the outcast class. This may, of course, be due in part to a liberal spirit rather than to a purely radical bond of sympathy, as there are many liberal thinkers amongst the Japanese people at large who sympathise with them. Nevertheless, it may be pertinent to remark that on questioning a well-known leader of the Japanese Labour movement, one who is himself a "Moderate," as to the possibilities of a revolutionary outbreak at any time in the future, the rather non-committal reply came : "The country as a whole is more likely to resort to Fascism than to Bolshevism ; but then, how many people outside Russia knew anything of Lenin or Trotsky in 1915 ? Japan may quite possibly have her Lenin and her Trotsky even now, just waiting for the right moment." From other remarks he made on this occasion, the speaker rather implied that such a leader might be found, either among the radical *Suiheisha* or among the exiled Socialists, of whom there are still a few living abroad awaiting a favourable opportunity to return.

As bearing, however, on the remark that Fascism is more likely than Bolshevism in Japan, the following quotation from an article by Dr. Washio, a liberal thinker and close observer of Japanese politics, appearing on

17th December, 1927, in the columns of the *Japan Advertiser*, is of interest. After giving his reasons for believing that an even worse financial panic than that which broke out in Japan in April that year was likely, unless proper steps were taken to avert it in time, he wrote :

“ Such a panic will mean a general collapse and will be accompanied by riot. It will be a revolution. The immensity of the task of facing it will put to flight not only political parties but most of the present ruling interests of the country. Then the field will be cleared for the appearance of a Mussolini and it is almost certain that the Army will rally to his support. Anyone who can control the Army at that time can accomplish a revolution in a week with no lasting damage to the interests of the people and the nation as a whole.”

Dr. Washio added, “ This is not a gloomy picture. It is rather a bright prospect, and it is because of this prospect of a swift and harmless revolution that we do not lose hopes even in the depth of our pessimism.”

Many people will probably “ pooh-pooh ” such a prophecy ; but close observers of the situation cannot but admit that there is a certain amount of evidence to support it. Reverence for their Emperor and the intense love of the people for their own country should ensure that, if discontent ever leads to revolution, the outcome will be Fascism rather than Bolshevism.

Japan's disruptive elements, as noted elsewhere, are not by any means confined to the Left Wing. There are also numerous reactionary bodies, self-styled super-patriots who go out of their way to create disturbances and gain notoriety for themselves. Some there are among these reactionaries who are sincere in their belief that they are working in the best interests of their country ; but unfortunately the bulk of them merely use the cry of patriotism as a cloak for their own very questionable practices and are not by any means averse to resorting to blackmail, graft, perjury, and criminal assault to achieve

their ends. In many ways they are a greater danger to the State than the Left Wing radicals, as, by their actions, they make the masses give a more sympathetic hearing to the radical propagandists than otherwise they would do.

While, however, the disciples of Marx and Engels at one end of the scale and the reactionaries at the other, play a not unimportant part in the Japanese labour or proletarian movement, they are mere drops in the ocean so far as the masses of the people are concerned. Before concluding this chapter, therefore, attention must be directed toward these masses, especially to the rural communities which, as already noted, account for more than fifty per cent. of the population.

The industrial workers may have plenty of cause for discontent and, being divorced from the land and insecure in the matter of employment, provide a better soil for the reception of Marxian doctrines than do their brothers engaged in agricultural pursuits. At the same time, they are inclined to regard their capitalist employers as something in the nature of a necessary evil, as they realise that it is thanks to them that the factories, mines, and industries generally, which give employment to so many hundreds of thousands, are maintained and operated. Unless, therefore, conditions are outrageously oppressive, there is not much to be gained by resorting to revolutionary methods against the capitalistic class.<sup>1</sup> On the contrary, there is much to be lost. With the peasantry, however, the case is different. The peasant class in Japan, in the great majority of cases, gets nothing from the landlords, for they have to supply their own grain, their own labour, and, in addition, have to pay an ex-

<sup>1</sup> It is worthy of note that labour disputes are now mainly concerned with demands for better working conditions and discharge allowances, and opposition to reduction of pay. Formerly the principal cause of disputes was the demand for higher wages. Disputes ending in strikes are now decreasing, as the men prefer to carry on with their work while negotiating with their employers. Labour legislation in Japan is still somewhat backward, though some advance in passing measures for the amelioration of working conditions has been made in the past few years.

orbitant rent, which eats up every cent of profit they might otherwise make. Very different is this to the factory worker or miner, who merely has to supply his own personal labour and who, far from having to pay rent to his employer, receives a fixed wage for his services. Whereas, therefore, the factory worker has everything to lose and very little to gain by rising against his employer, the peasant has nothing to lose and everything to gain by a successful rising against his landlord, whose only function in the majority of cases is to collect rent.

The fact is that in Japan the assessed value of land, and therefore the land-tax, in the country districts is so disproportionately high in relation to the real value, that agriculture can no longer be made to pay. With the rise in the standard of living, the land can no longer be made to support both tenant and landlord. Consequently the tenant farmers, who comprise approximately 25 % of the total population of Japan, are in desperate straits, and disputes, sometimes ending in serious riots, between them and their landlords, generally on the matter of rent, are becoming increasingly frequent and serious. From 85 disputes of this kind in 1917, they rose to as many as 2029 in 1926, involving 116,669 tenants and 30,601 landlords.<sup>1</sup> The past three years, it is true, have shown a decrease in the number and there is even a tendency in some districts for closer co-operation between land-owners and peasants ; but the gravity and bitterness of the disputes has more than made up for the small numerical drop.

The tenant-farmer question is one of the most serious internal problems that Japan has to face at the present time ; for, in their poverty-stricken condition, these tenant-farmers are easy subjects for propaganda by Socialists, who represent the landlords as extortionate tyrants bent only on exploiting them. A few figures, taken from official statistics, will suffice to show how very real this

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* " Japan Year Book," 1930 edition.

poverty is in the country districts of Japan. A survey of forty typical villages, taken a few years ago, showed that the average peasant was spending only 15.9 sen a day on his food (rather less than 4d.), though in some instances the expenditure ran to from 18 to 20 sen a day. Only one family in ten was able to afford a full diet of rice, the staple food of Japan, while seven out of ten families had to be content with a mixture consisting of half rice and half barley. Moreover, it was found that in most cases this rice was of the very poorest quality, the residue, in fact, of the rice grown by themselves, so poor in quality that there was no market for it.

As for other foods, it was found that nine families out of ten could afford nothing but the coarse Japanese pickles to eat with their rice or rice-barley mixture, and that only one in ten was ever able to supplement its diet with fish. One result of all this poverty in the rural districts is that signs of malnutrition are everywhere in evidence and the percentage of infant mortality is even greater than in the cities. Even, however, with this small expenditure on food, farmers are unable to make both ends meet, and official statistics show that one in six hundred of the tenant-farmers goes bankrupt each year because of his mounting deficits, which average rather over forty-four yen a year.

Mr. Sugiyama, an ardent social worker, writing in the *Japan Christian Quarterly* of September 1927, pointed to one very disquieting feature in connection with these conditions when he remarked that, whereas formerly the social workers in the country districts were largely Christians, who engaged in their work from the spiritual standpoint as apart from the political, they are now largely Marxian theorists with materialistic principles. As the mass of the peasantry is not yet self-directing, they are ready to follow whatever lead they are given. The conclusion to be drawn from this is obvious; consequently this aspect of the situation is one that calls for serious consideration.

Under these circumstances it is perhaps fortunate that the tenant-farmers, though forming some 25 per cent. of the total population of Japan, are about equalled in numbers by peasant proprietors or yeomen farmers, owning and working their own lands. Economically these small-holders are little or no better off than the tenant farmers, and many of them are in constant danger of being forced by economic necessity to sell their lands and drop to the position of tenants. Moreover, a largish percentage of them lease land to supplement their own, so that they really come under the category of tenant-farmers themselves. On the other hand, despite their poverty and their hard struggle for existence, the fact that they own land of their own, land which, however limited in extent, has been owned and tilled for generations past by their forbears, gives them an innate feeling of pride and superiority, which causes them to stand aloof from the disputes between landlords and tenants and is likely to range them alongside the former rather than the latter in the event of a serious up-rising.

That the stabilising influence of the yeomen farmer has been recognised by the authorities is well shown by the Government's scheme to assist tenants, by means of low-interest loans, to purchase their lands and become peasant proprietors. Unfortunately, however, the sale of their lands by small-holders, to which reference has been made above, is proceeding at a far greater pace than is the creation of new independent farmers by means of Government assistance. Economic conditions are, in fact, forcing peasant proprietors to sell their lands and be reduced to the position of tenant-farmers at the rate of about 10,000 yearly.

While, however, this particular scheme may have been a failure, the governing authorities are fully alive to the necessity of improving conditions in the agricultural communities, and besides continuing it in a revised form, they are devoting much attention to the study of other



ways and means to save the situation. The question of financing the rice crop in order to maintain a stable price has come in for serious discussion. So too has the question of securing such a distribution of fertilisers as shall be most advantageous to the farmer. While there is still a lack of definite measures directed to this particular end, definite steps have already been taken in other directions to help the farmer. Encouragement is given to the production of agricultural by-products, and a number of government institutions have been established for the express purpose of studying the farmer's interests. From these institutions he is given valuable assistance and advice. The advice thus tendered is not given in vain, for the Japanese farmer is both hard-working and enterprising, and takes up new ideas for the increase of production with a readiness that is in marked contrast to that innate conservatism and inability to adopt new methods, which is common to so many agricultural communities.

A detailed account of agricultural conditions and the system of land tenure in Japan, a full description of which is really necessary for a proper understanding of the whole question of rural unrest, would require a volume in itself. Suffice it to say, therefore, that absentee landlordism plays a not unimportant part in the troubles which are now besetting the country districts of Japan, and that 70 per cent. of the landlords owning over  $2\frac{1}{2}$  acres are in this category ; that out of  $5\frac{1}{2}$  million families engaged in agriculture (both tenant-farmers and yeomen depend on their own families for labour, and hired labour is therefore a comparatively minor factor), 35 % till less than  $1\frac{1}{4}$  acres each and 90 % till less than 5 acres ; that 50 % of the land-owners own less than  $1\frac{1}{4}$  acres each and that 90 % have under  $7\frac{1}{2}$  acres ; that, unlike industrial workers, tenant-farmers are not mere labourers but have to invest in fertilisers and farm implements and bear risks, the only burden on the landlord being the payment of taxes ; that the farmer is made to pay proportionately more than

double in national, prefectural, and town or village taxes what the merchant pays, and more than three times as much as the manufacturer ; that the landlord finds it more profitable to invest his money in industrial undertakings than in land (he can make a safe 6 % in the former as against a possible 3 % in the latter) and therefore does so ; that the old-established political parties represent the interests of the landlords as against the tenants and are therefore becoming unpopular with the latter ; that the protective tariff of the present Government increases the economic hardships of the agricultural worker and forces the overloaded farmer to carry unproductive urban industry on his back ; that the tradition of feudalism, which made the landlord seem a superior being, is rapidly dying out ; that the peasants, impatient at the delay in the needed reforms, are becoming more radical. When we take all these and other such factors into consideration, it will be seen that matters have reached a more serious pass than is generally realised.

Lest, however, the foregoing facts tend to paint too gloomy a picture, let it be remembered that urban and industrial Labour is now largely in favour of constitutional methods to remedy their grievances ; that in the rural districts the people are thinking less in terms of politics than of economics and would, in any case, prefer to support a progressive Liberal than a Socialistic Radical ; that they are by nature anti-revolutionary and merely ask for a square deal and the right to live ; that the Army and Navy are thoroughly loyal ; that the fishermen, who number some 1,300,000, are largely conservative and averse to radical measures ; that it is only a minute fraction of the people that is anti-dynastic ; and that the middle class, which has only come into existence since the abolition of feudalism sixty years ago and which now forms an important section of the community, is so closely connected with the capitalistic interests that it would give its support to Capital in

preference to Labour if Labour showed unduly radical tendencies.

Provided, therefore, that the present governing classes temper firmness with liberality and justice, and steer a middle course between oppression and too lax control, the likelihood of a serious uprising is not so great as at first sight it might appear to be. As for the chances of a strong Labour or Proletarian Party emerging, this is quite out of the question until the process of organisation has progressed very much further than it has done up to now, and until the various labour and proletarian elements can agree among themselves to sink their differences and form a united front.

## CHAPTER VII

### REACTIONARY ELEMENTS

THAT there is a great deal of unrest and discontent in Japan at the present time is not to be denied, but to infer from the accounts of Government activities against the Radicals that Communism is widespread would be entirely erroneous. Amongst the many hundreds arrested in the raids and round-ups conducted in 1928 and 1929, a large proportion consisted of young students and "intellectuals" of the parlour-Bolshevic variety, men who, in the normal course of events, would probably soon outgrow their youthful enthusiasm for advanced social theories and settle down to a quiet existence as loyal subjects of their Emperor. Your hundred-per-cent. Communist is still something of a *rara avis* in Japan.

Far more numerous, and in certain respects more menacing to peace and good order, are the reactionaries who, by their constant prating of patriotism and their self-imposed rôle as super-patriots, seeking to save their country from the inrush of subversive doctrines, contrive all too frequently to escape the punishment that their actions merit. "Patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel," said Dr. Johnson, and it would seem that that virtue is as much abused in Japan to-day as it evidently was in eighteenth-century England.

Although these active reactionaries form but a very small portion of the population, the influence exercised by them is such that no study of modern Japan, and of the social forces that are working within it, would be complete if the influence exercised by them, both on the home and the foreign politics of the country, were left out of account.

In this chapter, therefore, an attempt will be made to describe something of the make-up and general activities of, what some writers have called, the Japanese brand of Fascisti.

*Ronin* or *Soshi*<sup>1</sup> are the terms generally applied to them, though it is usual to describe them as the spiritual descendants of the *Kyokaku* and *Otokodate*, who first came upon the scene in the seventeenth century, in the early days of the Tokugawa Era. At the outset they consisted of stout-hearted plebeians, who formed themselves into bands in order to protect themselves and to right the wrongs inflicted on them by the haughty, swaggering *hatamoto*, the personal followers of the Shogun. Now and then these *hatamoto* would go so far as to cut down inoffensive citizens who, as the late Professor Murdoch put it in his monumental *History of Japan*, "... had the ill-luck unwittingly to come between the wind and their nobility." Even towards the ordinary *samurai*, these *hatamoto* adopted a truculent attitude. When finally, therefore, the townsmen of Yedo (the ancient Tokyo) formed themselves into groups of *otokodate* in order to pay back the Shogun's bannermen in their own coin, the lesser *daimyo* (feudal lords) and their *samurai* attendants soon came to recognise them as useful allies and readily sought their services. Thus it came about that the *Oyakata*, the leaders of these plebeian stalwarts, were able to exercise considerable influence and, as their power increased, their original altruistic Robin Hood rôle of defenders of the weak gradually underwent a change.

With most *oyakata* the rule was, that no applicant should be rejected and that no questions about his past

<sup>1</sup> In feudal times the *ronin* (literally "wave-men") were free-lance warriors, men of the *samurai* class who, for one reason or another, were temporarily unattached to any particular overlord. The modern *ronin* is, to all intents and purposes, an adventurer, who, either from a mistaken notion of patriotism or in order to gain his own ends, refuses to be bound by the ordinary conventions and is a law unto himself. A *soshi* (literally "brave knight") is a bravo or political rowdy.

should be asked. *Ronin*, gamblers, murderers, and adventurers in general soon, therefore, outnumbered the genuine stalwarts, and hypocrites and worthless scoundrels of all sorts became plentiful in the *otokodate* bands. Meantime the insolence of the *hatamoto* swashbucklers had been curbed and their truculence suppressed. The main *raison d'être* of the *otokodate* had therefore ceased to exist, but they nevertheless continued to flourish and, long before the end of the century, most of these bands had degenerated into con-fraternities of gamblers, loafers, and unprincipled rowdies.

With the enforced opening of the country to foreign intercourse in the middle of last century, many genuine patriots regarded it as their duty to murder and make things so unpleasant for their uninvited foreign guests that they would be forced to leave the country, and everywhere was heard the cry, "*Sonnō Jōi*," "Reverence for the Emperor! Expulsion of the Foreigners!" To the genuine patriots, however, were added many of these unprincipled rowdies, and although the old catch-phrase of "*Sonnō Jōi*" has long ceased to be heard, the spirit that animated those who endeavoured to put it into practice is still much in evidence amongst the groups of reactionaries existing at the present day, a fact that speaks eloquently of the origin of these disquieting elements.

At the present time, the reactionary bodies may be divided roughly into two classes, corresponding approximately to the anti-foreign element of what may be called the *Sonnō Jōi* period, and to the *otokodate* bands of the Tokugawa Era respectively. The organisations of the former are mainly of pre-war formation and concern themselves principally with the country's foreign relations. Those of the latter are primarily a product of the early post-War period and make it their practice to combat, by fair means or foul, the rising tide of democracy and modern thought, as exemplified in such diverse matters



as the Labour, Liberal, and Socialist movements, Manhood Suffrage, Women's Rights, western dancing and bobbed hair !

At the same time, it is by no means unusual to find both pre-War and post-War groups acting in collusion, and both are distinguished by a common emphasis on their own loyalty and patriotism and on the evil and unpatriotic character of those whose views are at variance with their own.

If they were content to give vent to their feelings by means of letters to the Press and platform speeches, no very great harm would be done. Such methods are, in fact, employed by them to a certain extent ; but they do not stop at this. Violence, blackmail, and intimidation are their stock in trade, and even murder is not unknown to them. Since the opening of the country to foreign intercourse roughly seventy years ago, one statesman after another has fallen a victim to reactionary assassins. Starting with the Regent, Ii Kamon no Kami, who was murdered in 1860 by reactionaries, because his overtures towards the foreign powers were viewed with alarm, a long list could be drawn up, extending down to recent times. Okubo, Iwakura, and Okuma, all statesmen of the first rank, had attempts made on their lives, the attempt on the first-named being successful and that on Okuma being very nearly so, as he suffered the loss of a leg blown off by a bomb. One assassination took place on the actual morning of the promulgation of the Constitution in 1889, the victim being the very able Minister of Education, Viscount Mori, whose pro-foreign tendencies had caused much irritation in reactionary circles.

Coming down to more recent times, we have the murder of Mr. Abé, Director of Political Affairs in the Foreign Office, who suffered death at the hands of an assassin because of the Government's refusal to listen to the popular clamour for the chastisement of China, after three Japanese hawkers had been murdered by marauding

soldiery in the Nanking riots of 1913. Six years later Mr. Maruyama, the aged proprietor of the *Asahi*, was set upon and badly beaten, on account of the strong stand taken by him against intervention in Siberia.

These are but a few instances, taken at random, of men in high positions being murdered, or very nearly so, out of so-called patriotic motives. Many others could be added to the list. There is even reason to believe that Japanese *ronin* may have had a hand in the death of Chang Tso-lin, the famous Manchurian War-lord, in June 1928, though this is a very debatable point. Certain it is that certain men of this type boasted of being implicated in the bombing of his train, though this may have been said out of a sense of bravado. Officially it was denied that any Japanese took part in it.

It may be thought strange that these *ronin*, or anyone else, should openly boast of being concerned in a dastardly plot of this kind, especially if, in reality, they had nothing whatever to do with it. In professing to have been the perpetrators, however, they were merely running true to form, for your hundred-per-cent super-patriot likes to give himself credit for all sorts of abominable crimes, provided he can point to some patriotic motive behind his action. The murderer of Mr. Abé, to prove his sincerity and draw attention to what he had done, spread out a map of China and, squatting on it, proceeded to disembowel himself. Like Viscount Mori's assassin, who had a shrine erected to his memory, he received high praise from his fellow reactionaries, because the motive of the crime was ostensibly patriotic.

Another man who received great applause was the murderer of Zenjiro Yasuda, the well-known banker, who was stabbed to death in September 1921. The motive in this case, it is true, was not patriotism ; but the fact that Yasuda was regarded as a sort of Shylock, and that his murderer promptly committed suicide after carrying out the bloody deed, was sufficient to win high praise for the

assassin, as suicide under such circumstances is regarded in Japan as proving that, as the assailant was prepared to sacrifice his own life, he was at any rate sincere in his belief that he was doing right. Curiously enough, in this particular instance both the extreme Right and the extreme Left found common ground for rejoicing, as the murderer himself was a reactionary while his victim was one of the hated capitalists. Consequently the murderer's funeral, which was carried out on an elaborate scale, was widely attended both by reactionaries and labour leaders, though normally these two sections of the community are at daggers drawn.

To say that they are at daggers drawn is not merely a figure of speech. All too often this is true, both literally as well as metaphorically, as will be shown later. Before proceeding further on this line, however, it will be well to retrace our steps somewhat.

It has already been shown how, in Tokugawa times, the bands of *otokodate* stalwarts came to co-operate as allies with the *samurai* of the lesser feudal lords against the overbearing arrogance of the Shogun's personal retainers, the *hatamoto*. The *Kyokaku*, or captains of these bands of townsmen, were generally labour contractors, and provided carriers and porters for the feudal lords on the occasions of the visits, which Tokugawa regulations forced them to make to the capital at stipulated periods. Even to this day the *Kyokaku* tradition is most markedly preserved in the sentiment and habits of the coolie labour bosses, and as recently as August 1928 residents in Tokyo had an unusual opportunity to see how much this tradition has survived. A building contractor, living in a small dwelling up an obscure blind alley in the centre of the city, was murdered in a brawl. Only a brief report of the affair appeared in the vernacular press; yet the funeral accorded to the victim was on a strikingly magnificent and elaborate scale. Hundreds of coolies were there carrying wreaths, the bearers of the coffin walked

with a *samurai* swagger—"pride in their port, defiance in their eyes," as one account put it <sup>1</sup>—the group of chief mourners, clad in antique white attire, strode along with an air of self-confidence, a volunteer fire-brigade led the van singing a hoarse chant to the accompaniment of the savage tom-tom rhythm of hand drums, while a detachment of the Young Men's Associations and an unexplained detachment of uniformed Chinese were likewise much in evidence.

Why such a funeral should have been accorded was hard to discover, as shopkeepers of the district, when asked about the circumstances of this strange pageant, displayed reticence, though one onlooker imparted the information that the dead man was "a kind of *ronin*." As the writer of the account quoted above observed: "Looking on those hundreds of wreaths and on the stalwart self-confident mourners—for so they must be called, though everything suggested pride rather than grief—it was plain that he who lay in that Shinto bier with a knife through his heart was a man of many friends, a leader in some powerful, obscure organisation."

Secret societies are forbidden by Japanese Law, and even membership in so philanthropic an institution as a Masonic Lodge is debarred to Japanese subjects. Yet despite this ruling, "obscure organisations," such as the one of which this building contractor was seemingly a leader, are numerous and are generally in close alliance with the acknowledged reactionary groups.

Like the *otokodate* bands of old, after degeneration had set in, they include a large proportion of what, for want of a better term, may be called "toughs" and bullies. Their services are at the disposal of the highest bidder, and unscrupulous politicians and others are not averse to employing them for such purposes as breaking up, and generally disturbing, the meetings of political rivals, intimidating voters, and extorting money by threat.

<sup>1</sup> *Japan Advertiser*, August 24th, 1928.

Working, as they so often do, in collusion with the reactionary societies, they are able to bully and brow-beat persons in all ranks of life, from the leading statesmen and high officials down to minor clerks and humble labourers. By keeping a close watch on the personal doings of men in high positions, they are able to blackmail those against whom, or against whose friends or relations, they have obtained proofs of dishonest practices or immoral conduct. However clear a conscience the victim himself may have, the fear that his refusal to have any truck with the blackmailer may bring about reprisals on friends or relations must daunt even the bravest. The threat of the reactionaries to reveal the knowledge they have in their possession is generally sufficient, therefore, to squeeze out hush money or to have other requests of theirs carried out. Frequently it is for this latter purpose that blackmail is employed, and therein lies the real danger to the State.

Reprehensible as is the extortion of money by means of blackmail, it is harmful only to the individual victims concerned; but when it comes to using blackmail on leading statesmen and officials, in order to force them to shape their policies as directed, the whole country is likely to suffer. It is by employing blackmail in this way that the reactionary societies, assisted by these gangsters and unprincipled rowdies, are at times able to exert so much influence, both on the foreign and the domestic policies of Japan. It is said, in fact, that the *Kokuryukai*, and other societies of a similar nature, had much to do with the oppressive war-time policy adopted towards China, and it is certain that much of the rowdyism in the years preceding the passage of the Universal Manhood Suffrage Bill in 1925, like that which was rampant in the opening years of the parliamentary system in Japan, was due to the instigation of the reactionary groups and gangsters in their employ.

Having now shown something of the general working of

the reactionary elements in the country, we can direct our attention to a more specific consideration of some of the outstanding groups. As already noted, the spirit that animated the cry of "*Sonnō Jōi*" sixty odd years ago has been inherited, in modified form, by some of these bodies existing at the present day. This applies particularly to those organised prior to the World War, and it is with these that we must deal first.

The best known and the most militant is the *Kokuryukai*, or Black Dragon Society, with the notorious Ryohei Uchida and Dr. Terao at their head. Organised in 1901 with the object of opposing Russian Imperialism, the society was purely patriotic in nature at the outset. Later it espoused the cause of "Asia for the Asiatics" and, establishing *The Asian Review*, a monthly organ published in English, carried out a campaign of virulent abuse against the white races in general and against Great Britain in particular. Indian agitators were welcomed to the fold and were given assistance, both moral and material, and it is generally believed that it was due to the efforts of this society that the British request, made some years ago for the extradition of certain Indian extremists, who had fled to Japan to escape justice, was refused. The more recent efforts of the society to enlist the support of the Japanese Government in the Pan-Asiatic movement have, however, failed and the abortive Pan-Asian Conference held in Nagasaki in 1925 showed clearly that the Government had no intention of becoming involved in any such chimerical scheme.<sup>1</sup>

Though misguided, the patriotism of many of the members of this society is no doubt sincere; but, like all the other reactionary bodies in Japan, the membership includes a large proportion of the worst elements in the Country, *soshi* and *gorotsuki*, blackguards and bullies

<sup>1</sup> The *Kokuryukai* is also a strong advocate of a "forward" policy in China, and, owing to their activities in Chinese affairs, its members are often referred to as *Shina* (China) *Ronin*.



without principle, men who are willing to go to any length, not even stopping short at murder.

The reactionary societies formed since the War are composed of similar elements, but they are far more numerous—about thirty in all—and are, as previously noted, anti-Socialist and anti-Communist rather than anti-foreign. But, just in the same way as the anti-foreign groups are prepared to stop at nothing in order to gain their ends, so also are murder and violence included in the “repertoire” of many of these post-war reactionary groups. In the months immediately following the country-wide round-up of Communistic elements in the Spring of 1928 they were particularly active, their activities during that period including raids on the headquarters of the Leftist Party, an armed raid on, and attempt to destroy, the printing press of the *Tokyo Asahi*, and a raid on the Soviet Embassy, in the grounds of which they exploded some blank bombs and left threatening messages pinned to a tree with a sword. Other disturbances besides these were carried out by them that same year. These included the breaking up of labour meetings and the injury of one and threat of injury to two other *Minseito*<sup>1</sup> members of the Diet. The worst exhibition of the lengths to which they are prepared to go, however, was seen on April 18th, when a reactionary “boss,” accompanied by half-a-dozen armed followers, interfered with a meeting that was being held by a party of lawyers and their client, an election agent, who was about to bring an action against the local chief of police in Wakayama. The “boss” offered to “arbitrate”; but, on his proposals being rejected, he, together with his followers, fell upon the assembled lawyers with daggers. Three were killed outright and five were wounded, one of them mortally.

Far from attempting to cover up their traces and flee in order to escape arrest, the reactionaries, having com-

<sup>1</sup> The *Minseito* were, at that time, the main Opposition Party in the Imperial Diet.

pleted their task, presented themselves at the police station and explained what had happened. In doing so, they were following out the traditions of old Japan, when men who took justice into their own hands and stood the consequences were regarded as heroes, no matter how ghastly the crime they had committed.

Like the funeral of the building contractor described earlier in this chapter, this murder, followed as it was by the voluntary surrender to the police, showed clearly the survival of customs and practices which seem strangely anachronistic in modern Japan. At the same time, it is not altogether surprising, when one considers how much such traditions are fostered and even encouraged. Every man, woman, and child in the country is taught to reverence the memory of the Forty-Seven Ronin,<sup>1</sup> although, judged by modern ethical standards, the means taken to avenge the death of their lord were open to grave censure. Then, too, the old classical drama which, even to this day, is so dear to the heart of a Japanese audience, revels in glorifying the most dastardly deeds and moral delinquencies, if it can be shown that their perpetrators, in committing them, were wholly or in part actuated by loyalty to their overlords. The professional story-tellers indulge in similar extolling of crimes committed in the sacred name of loyalty, and even the cinematograph is being used in the same way and to the same end. The term "loyalty" is, in fact, almost as much abused in Japan as is the word patriotism, and in both instances this abuse is clearly reflected in the reactionary movement itself and in the attitude of the people at large towards the reactionaries and their activities.

<sup>1</sup> These *ronin* were the loyal retainers of a certain lord who, in consequence of deliberate insults to which he was subjected by a superior, struck him in the face. The penalty for such an offence in those days was self-immolation, a penalty which was duly carried out. His retainers, knowing the circumstances of the case, swore to avenge his death. After many years of patient waiting till the superior was off his guard, they broke into his dwelling and, having removed his head, carried it to the grave of their late master and there disembowelled themselves.

Of the thirty or more reactionary societies existing at the present time, those of post-War formation that have come into the most prominence are the *Kokusuiikai* (National Essence Society), *Kenkokukai* (National Foundations Society), *Taikosha* (Great Action Society), *Sekka-boshidan* (Anti-Red Society), *Taikakai* (Great Culture Society), *Kokufukai* (National Traditions Society), *Kokoku Isshinkai* (National Elevation and Renewal Society), *Tekketsusha* (Iron and Blood Society), and *Sekishindan* (Red Heart Party).

Of these, the largest and most influential is the *Kokusuiikai*, a body formed largely of the rougher elements of society under semi-official auspices in 1919. It is generally believed that it was at the instigation of the late Mr. Hara, who was Premier at the time, that this organisation came into being, though it was Mr. Tokonami, the Home Minister, who received the main prominence in connection with its formation. Be the instigator who it may, someone in high official circles conceived the idea that the modern counterparts of the *Kyokaku* and *otokodate* might be of use to the authorities as strike-breakers and for counteracting the rising tide of radicalism, if they were formed into a patriotic society. While, therefore, it was emphasised at the outset that the organisation, when brought into being, was not to be considered in any way official, an air of respectability was conferred upon it by the fact that a retired Army Officer, Lieut. General Sato, accepted the Presidency at the outset.

It soon became evident, however, that the high hopes of its promoters were not to be fulfilled. The blustering way in which they attempted, often quite gratuitously, to settle labour disputes and "mediate" in strikes, roused the ire of the Labour leaders and lost them any faith or confidence that the employers might otherwise have placed in them, while the police regarded them with disfavour as trespassers on their preserves. Not only did

they fail from the very outset to command respect—unless it was the respect born of fear that bullies, in all walks of life, receive from those who have the misfortune to suffer at their hands ; they also soon showed signs of internal strife amongst themselves.

The first President, Lt.-General Kojiro Sato, was the author of *The Coming War with America* and of many inflammatory newspaper articles having for their text : “ *Deutsche uber Alles*,” with Japan in the rôle of Germany. On being succeeded by a *Seiyukai* politician,<sup>1</sup> one Murano by name, this fire-eating paladin assumed the leadership of the so-called Kwanto Party, the most belligerent clique of the *Kokusuiikai*, and proceeded to inveigh against the alleged submission of the society to the *Seiyukai* whom, it was averred, were using them as a tool. Differences of opinion soon became so acute that a number of the more hot-headed of the ex-President’s followers, in strict accordance with ancient tradition, bade farewell to their families, to whom they confided their intention to resort to force and, if necessary, give their lives in order to prove the righteousness of their cause.

Fortunately, the horrible threats of murder and sudden death failed to materialise, as General Sato induced the new President to sign a pledge to the effect that he did not intend to submerge the liberties and independence of the Society to the interests of the *Seiyukai*. The written pledge was then shown to everyone concerned, and General Sato himself offered a semi-apology for ever having imagined that Mr. Murano would ever have done such a thing !

After such an exhibition of heroics on the part of the hotheads in bidding farewell to their families, this ending came as something of an anti-climax. The whole affair may, in fact, seem too trivial to mention in such detail. This mixture of mock heroics and petty strife is, however,

<sup>1</sup> The *Seiyukai* was, at that time, the Government Party in the Lower House.

so typical of the reactionary bodies in general and, as such, is so charged with dangerous possibilities, that it seems well to quote this case at some length as an example.

The two most notable incidents in the history of the *Kokusuiikai* were the so-called "battle of Nara" in 1923, and a cowardly assault made by them on the very outspoken veteran politician, Mr. Yukio Ozaki. In the former instance, they fought for several days on end with the *Suiheisha*, the organisation of outcasts mentioned in a previous chapter, causing numerous casualties on both sides.

On another occasion a Mr. Miki, a member of the Diet, referred to them as a gang of *gorotsuki* (bullies and vagabonds), an accusation which aroused them to indignation and brought a demand for an apology. Their defamer quietly replied that he had not said they were all *gorotsuki*, but he knew that *gorotsuki* were included in their membership! The apology was accepted at the time, but they had their revenge on him a few months later, when he was waylaid and given a thrashing at Otsu, in Western Japan.

In view of the immunity accorded to these reactionaries, and considering their revengeful spirit, it requires a brave man to stand up to them. As a nation, the Japanese are behind none in the matter of physical courage, but they are often lacking in moral courage. In no respect is this more noticeable than in the matter of patriotism. The accusation of being unpatriotic, no matter how little foundation there may be for it, is dreaded to such an extent that men will do almost anything to avoid such a stigma. By playing on the fears of their victims in this respect, reactionary blackmailers are said to extort no small sum of money. The mere hint that it would be unpatriotic to refuse support to so patriotic an organisation as that which the blackmailer professes to represent, and that failure to pay up is likely to bring this accusation upon him, is generally sufficient. The wretched victim knows that this is no idle threat and that, however pre-

posterior the accusation may be, things will be made very unpleasant for him, if he disregards the warning. This applies not only to individuals, but even to big business firms. The latter, knowing the vindictiveness of these men and the harm they can do, generally prefer to hand over a "subscription" rather than risk the consequences, an action which accounts for the fact that the most unexpected names are often found on the lists of supporters of reactionary societies.

Not only are large sums of money handed over in order to avoid the trumped-up charge of being unpatriotic, but all kinds of strange steps are taken to escape persecution of this kind. Thus the Japanese collaborator of the late Professor Murdoch withheld his name from appearing as such in the second volume of his *History of Japan*, as he feared to incur the anger of these pseudo-patriots, who regard unpleasant truths about the history of their country as almost akin to treason. That his fears were not unjustified was made clear some two or three years ago, when another Japanese historian, Dr. Tetsujiro Inouye, professor emeritus of Tokyo Imperial University and member of the House of Peers, published a scholarly work on *Japan's National Constitution and the National Morals*. For having written therein that the original sacred mirror and sword, which form part of the imperial regalia, were no longer in existence, and that the articles kept in the imperial palaces were replicas, he was forced, by the persecution to which he was subjected by reactionaries, to withdraw the volume from circulation and to destroy all the remaining copies.

With such distorted views on patriotism, the difficulty of checking up the true facts in Japanese history will be readily appreciated.

Fortunately, of late years there has been a tendency, both on the part of the authorities and of the public at large, to stand up against the worst extravagances of the reactionary bodies, though there is still far too much



leniency shown them. There have always been a few fearless men, like Messrs. Yukio Ozaki and Miki, who have been prepared to speak their minds freely regarding these super-patriots and take the consequences ; but it remained for the late Count Kato to take the first drastic official steps against them. This came about in the following way.

Early in 1925, a criminal case involving a certain Mr. Iino, a mysterious figure popularly known as the Onden Divine, or God of Onden, was brought to light. A newspaper reporter of one of the leading journals, the *Hochi*, scenting that there was a " big story " in the background if anyone had the courage to investigate it, set to work with a will and was soon in a position to present his findings to the general public. The revelations were startling in the extreme, for they showed clearly that the Onden Divine was a kind of Japanese Rasputin, a man who exerted a truly baneful influence over some of the most prominent figures in the land. In order to evade police examination, the divine feigned illness, thereby gaining time for various underhand manoeuvres among influential men in order to keep him out of the hands of the police. This, at least, was freely reported at the time, and it was never denied. There was only a discreet silence in the circles best placed to know the truth, and the Onden Divine seemed to feel confident of his ability to defy the Law. But the police authorities under the Kato Ministry refused to relax their search and, sufficient evidence having been collected, he was committed for trial.

While the prosecution of the " God of Onden " was still pending, a plot to assassinate the Premier was discovered. Investigations showed that the plan to murder him had apparently been drawn up under reactionary auspices, and the notorious leader of the Black Dragon Society, Ryohei Uchida, who had hitherto been regarded as beyond the reach of the police, was bound over for trial as an accessory before the act.

There does not appear to have been any connection between these two cases ; but the fact that the late Count Kato was the first high official to come out with determination to detect and punish crime committed by these self-styled patriots, with the same impartiality that is meted out to the criminal who has no such organisation behind him, showed not only his personal courage but also that he himself, unlike so many other Japanese politicians, was free from entanglement of any kind with the *ronin* fraternity. It is, in fact, in no small part due to the use that certain political leaders and officials have, at times, made of these men, to further their own ends, that so great a measure of immunity has hitherto been enjoyed by the reactionary bodies. Mr. Wakatsuki, who was Minister of Home Affairs at the time, was at no pains to hide up the fact that such connections existed. In an address to the prefectural governors, emphasising the Government's intention to exercise strict control henceforth over reactionary violence, he remarked that this particular brand of violence had been " . . . . tolerated and even abetted in the past by high Government officials and politicians," and that they were " inclined to take advantage of it instead of controlling it."

Unfortunately, the strong stand taken by the Kato Ministry showed signs of weakening after the death of its leader in 1926 and its own overthrow in the following year, with the result that 1928 saw a recrudescence of reactionary violence. Baron Tanaka, however, who meantime had become Premier, was not the sort of man to put up with this kind of nonsense indefinitely and, although his own Ministry was itself inclined to be reactionary in some respects, signs were not lacking to show that the reactionary societies would have to " watch their step " if they were to escape his active displeasure. Under the Hamaguchi Cabinet, which succeeded that of Baron Tanaka in July 1929 and is still in power, this attitude has become even more marked. The general public is likewise

exhibiting evidences of becoming tired of the reactionary antics, and the leading units of the vernacular Press have, in the past few years, been far more outspoken than ever they were before in censuring the wild, futile acts of these anachronistic bodies.

Members of the *Kenkokukai*, who were responsible for much of the reactionary extravagances of 1928, found this to their cost when they staged an armed raid on the office of the *Tokyo Asahi* in April that year. Forcing their way into the building with revolvers in their hands, they terrorised the staff and threw sand into the machinery in retaliation for the refusal of that paper, and its sister-journal in Osaka, to insert certain advertisements of theirs denouncing Count Makino, Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal, and Dr. Ikki, Minister of the Imperial Household, for their alleged failure to take vigorous action against "the new ideas which are destroying the national foundations." A few years ago this same paper was reported to have paid Y. 5,000 (£500) to the *Kenkokukai* to avoid persecution at their hands. Possibly, therefore, the reactionaries hoped that they would show a similar docility this time too. If so, they were doomed to disappointment, for on this occasion the *Asahi* management showed clearly that they were no longer prepared to lie down under their bullying and, instead, put up a fight and obtained police protection.

If only others would follow this lead and stand up to the reactionaries, intimidation of this kind would soon cease; but there is still far too much tendency to pay whatever is demanded, rather than risk being subjected to annoyance.

Some of the reactionaries, like the venerable Mitsuru Toyama, known as the Japanese Robin Hood, are, though misguided, sincere in their patriotism. This much has been admitted already; but the rogues and unprincipled rowdies that form the majority have things pretty well their own way, and bring discredit on the whole con-

fraternity. Sincerity may be credited to the young reactionary who, as a protest against the discriminatory clause against his countrymen in the American Immigration Law of 1924, disembowelled himself in front of the United States Embassy in Tokyo. It may even be that the party of young reactionaries who broke up the dance at the Imperial Hotel in June the same year and, with naked swords, solemnly performed a death dance, may have been sincere in their protest against what they considered to be the evils of western-style dancing, and against Americans who, in addition to passing the Immigration Law, were held responsible for spreading the craze for modern dancing amongst the Japanese. Certain it is that, as soon as they had it pointed out to them what harm they were doing their country by such actions, the *Taikosha*, the society that had staged this farcical raid, swung to the opposite extreme and theatrically offered their lives as a guarantee for the safety of American residents in Japan.

To give them their dues, there is, or appears to be, a certain rough code of chivalry amongst these bands of reactionaries, just as there was between the *otokodate* of the Tokugawa days. But the good in them is far outweighed by the harm they do, and nothing can be said to condone the murders and murderous attacks carried out by them or at their instigation ; nor can any excuse be found for the blackmail, intimidation, and general violence committed by them in the sacred name of patriotism. Instances of these have been given already, but a few more may be quoted before closing this subject.

In 1921 Heibei Takao, a Socialist, was shot dead by the President of the Anti-Bolshevic Society, a lawyer named Yonemura. In the same year the Premier, Mr. Hara, was assassinated by an unbalanced youth, who had been led by reactionary denunciations against the Administration into believing that he was doing a patriotic deed. In 1923, meetings in favour of Manhood Suffrage were broken up

by gangs of *soshi*, and Viscount Goto, who had been working hard for the restoration of diplomatic relations with Soviet Russia, had his house broken into by members of the Anti-Bolshevik Society. Still more recently, on March 5th, 1929, Mr. Yamamoto, a proletarian member of the Diet, was murdered in his lodgings by a young reactionary named Kuroda who, after vainly urging him to change his political views, fell upon him with a dagger. From time to time attempts have been made with varying success to break into the Foreign Office, the Premier's Residence, and other official buildings, in order to protest against actions or policies which these would-be patriots consider unpatriotic, while labour meetings are broken up, labour leaders mobbed, and violence in various shapes and forms committed. So strange is their idea of patriotism, that on one occasion, in 1928, snakes were let loose amongst the audience at a theatre, by way of protest against the action of the famous actor, Sadanji, in going to Moscow to give performances of *Kabuki*, the old classical drama of Japan. On another occasion the same year, one of the leading journals was visited by reactionaries with dire threats, because of an inadvertent printer's error (corrected as soon as discovered) which was deemed unpatriotic!

Many other crimes and follies—some merely puerile, others revolting—could be mentioned; but enough has been said to show how, from the highest to the lowest in the land, no one is entirely safe from the attentions of these gentry. With the widespread ramification of their activities and the influence they are thereby able to bring to bear, both on individuals and corporations and even on affairs of State, it must be readily admitted that the assertion, that no study of the social currents in Japan would be complete if the reactionaries were not taken into consideration as a factor, is not unjustified.

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As a postscript to, and as an interesting commentary on,

what has been written above, reference may be made to the death of Mr. Motoyuki Takabatake, which occurred at the close of 1928. In his early days, Mr. Takabatake was a Left Wing Socialist. As such, he had translated Kautsky's exposition of Marx's *Das Kapital*. The translation was published in a cheap edition, and became so popular, that it is said that close on 300,000 copies have been sold since its first appearance in 1919. Towards the end of his life, however, he, together with Mr. Toshi Akao,<sup>1</sup> another Left Winger, made a complete *volte-face*, denouncing the doctrines of Marx as impractical and espousing the cause of the reactionary extremists.

Unpopular as the reactionaries are, this sudden swing to the right by an influential member of the opposite camp may be regarded as almost prophetic of what may be expected in certain eventualities. The bulk of the nation has little love for the extremists of either side ; but, if ever it comes to a show-down, the people are far more likely to swing to the Right than to the Left. Even amongst the present supporters of the Left Wing, there are many who would, under such circumstances, take their stand on the side of Fascism rather than that of Bolshevism. Violent reaction of this kind has been frequent in the past history of the country. Reaction was seen in the twelfth century in the revolt of the warrior class against the effeminacy of the Fujiwara. It was seen six hundred years later in the revival of *Shinto* in opposition to Chinese teaching. The final overthrow of the Tokugawas and their policy of seclusion was the outcome of reaction, brought about by the introduction of Western learning, and the reactionary tendency of the present day is, in its origin, closely akin to that which was evinced

<sup>1</sup> Akao's *volte-face* is not, however, so complete as might appear. He still inveighs against the Capitalists, but affects a patriotic pose by contending that, just as the feudal lords handed over their lands and their titles to the Emperor, so ought the Capitalists to return their money and property to the Throne. In actual practice, this is nothing more than advocacy of State Socialism clothed in fine words.



among the *samurai*, on the abolition of the sword in 1871, and among the nation at large, fifteen or twenty years later, against the introduction of foreign clothes and customs as a result of disappointment in the matter of treaty revision.

The riots, in which the life of the late Marquis Komura was seriously threatened, following on the signing of the Portsmouth Treaty in 1905, and the indignation roused over the failure of the Japanese delegates at Versailles in the matter of racial equality fourteen years later, were equally symptomatic of the reactionary sentiment that lies hidden deep down in the hearts of the bulk of the people.

The present reactionary wave was largely stimulated by the rise of radicalism in the closing years of the War, and received further impetus as a result of the passage of the American Immigration Law in 1924. The future course of the reactionary movement will depend largely on whether the moderates or the extremists in the Labour cause win the day, and will almost certainly receive a check if the Immigration Law is revised in such a way as to remove the slur cast on Japan.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

ALTHOUGH anything from ten to twenty years are likely to pass before women in Japan are given the right to vote on equal terms with men, the movement aiming at elevating their status has been attracting considerable attention of late. Especially has it come into prominence since the grant of universal manhood suffrage five years ago, and there is little doubt that the 1928 elections, the first to be held under the new franchise law, helped to stimulate the movement to no small degree. In view, therefore, of the great changes that have been effected in recent years with regard to the position of women in Japan's social system, and of the still greater changes that are likely to be witnessed during the next decade or two, it may be profitable as well as interesting to look into the causes of this gradual transition, and to see what progress has been made up to the present time.

It is perhaps not without significance that the women's movement in Japan has certain points in common with the proletarian movement, which has come so much to the fore during the past few years. In each case the causes that are bringing about the elevation in status are much the same. The gradual weakening of the Family System, which has stood Japan so well in the past but which is not wholly adaptable to modern conditions ; the spread of education and the rapid development of industrialisation ; the ethical influence of Christianity, which is out of all proportion to its numerical strength. These, and many other causes, can be clearly seen in the background as the motive forces of the women's and proletarian movement alike.

Nor is it only in the causes that striking similarities are to be observed. The growing sympathy of the vernacular Press is common to both. So too are those factors such as lack of funds, lack of organisation, lack of co-operation, and lack of general, as opposed to local, interest, which do so much to retard social developments of this kind. Lack of enthusiasm on the part of the bulk of those whom it is sought to emancipate is another feature common to both, as also are many of those forces which tend to act as brakes, ensuring thereby that gradual evolution is more likely than violent revolution. Tradition is slow to die. Consequently, although feudalism is now a thing of the past and the individual is tending to supplant the family as the principal unit of society in Japan, the old ideas of filial piety and loyalty, which did so much to keep women in a position of inferiority and to leave the lower orders content to say in effect :

God bless the Squire and his relations,  
And keep us in our proper stations.

still exercise no small amount of influence on the country as a whole.

The Japanese woman's view of her own position in life, as will be shown later, might well be expressed by an adaptation of this couplet, which would then read :

God bless our men and their relations,  
And keep us women in our proper stations.

This, at least, was the view held almost universally until quite recent times, and it is still held by many even to this day.

While, therefore, causes such as those already enumerated have brought about, and have given impetus to, the movements aiming at elevating the position of women and the proletariat respectively, the old feudal and patriarchal tradition is by no means dead. It still retains sufficient influence to retard, to some extent, the development of the two movements. When, added to this, we

take into consideration the fact that Japanese women are far less organised for collective action than is labour in Japan, and that lack of organisation is one of the greatest handicaps to the Japanese proletarian movement at the present time, it is obvious that much hard work must be put in by the small, but active, handful of women directing the movement, before their demands for legal, social, and political equality with their menfolk are likely to be granted.<sup>1</sup>

That real headway is being made in raising the status of women in Japan is well exemplified, however, by the fact that certain sections of Miss Bacon's *Japanese Girls and Women*,<sup>2</sup> which for many years past has been regarded, very rightly, as the standard work on the position occupied by women in Japan, are now almost as misleading, in so far as present-day conditions are concerned, as are the works of Lafcadio Hearn regarding Japan as a whole. Even so recently published and authoritative a book as Faust's *New Japanese Womanhood*<sup>3</sup> requires a number of modifications and alterations.

Two typical examples of important changes, that have taken place since the publication of the second-named book four years ago, concern divorce and the legal profession. Under Japanese Law, adultery committed by a husband is neither punishable, nor does it entitle the wife to sue for divorce. In the case of a woman committing this offence, however, not only is it full cause for divorce on the part of the husband, but it is punishable by two years' imprisonment. This is but one of many instances in which Japanese Law discriminates most unfairly against women. It is highly significant, therefore, of the changing attitude on such matters, that the President of

<sup>1</sup> There are said to be about 13,000 women members in all belonging to organised industrial and farm unions. In addition, there are certain women's organisations, as will be shown later.

<sup>2</sup> First published 1891. Revised 1902. Republished 1919 by Messrs. Houghton Mifflin Co.

<sup>3</sup> Published 1926 by Messrs. Geo. H. Doran Co. New York.

the Supreme Court, in a case brought before him in 1927, decided to recognise the right of a married woman to take legal proceedings against her husband for misconduct. By this ruling, a precedent was set whereby men and women have, in this respect, been placed on an equal footing, both morally and legally.<sup>1</sup> It is worthy of note that it called forth the almost unanimous support and applause of the vernacular Press ; and the Emperor himself, at a dinner given shortly afterwards to the leading judicial officials, showed his interest in the matter by enquiring personally concerning the case, and listened attentively to a detailed account of it given by the President of the Supreme Court in reply.

As for the other change noted above as having taken place since the publication of Dr. Faust's book four years ago, it was stated in this work that, while the professional career for Japanese women is still limited, "Law is probably the only one from which they are absolutely excluded." This restriction still holds good, but a plan was drafted in 1927 to admit women to the bar. Although it failed to receive the necessary approval at the time, a similar plan is said to have been drawn up once more. The dissolution of the Imperial Diet on January 21st, 1930, prevented its being presented as soon as intended, but this is probably only a temporary check. Inasmuch as it will necessitate no additional expenditure, the authorities are said to anticipate little or no opposition, and expect to have it sanctioned before April next year, provided the vagaries of the political situation do not intervene once more.

Growing facilities for the education of Japanese women, and the change of attitude regarding their rights and, incidentally, their mentality, are said to have led to this step. In trials in which the alleged criminals are women,

<sup>1</sup> Although the law making adultery by a married woman a punishable offence has not been expunged, a revision now under contemplation will, if approved by the Diet, provide for similar punishment to erring husbands.

it is considered that women lawyers will be better fitted than men, as they will have more sympathy and a better understanding of the motives, while in juvenile cases too, they are expected to prove particularly useful.

In this connection it is interesting to note that a scheme is on foot to found a Law College for women in Tokyo, and that a special women's department, with courses in jurisprudence, political economy, and commerce, was formed recently as an adjunct of the Law College of the Meiji University. Those who complete the required courses in this department are eligible for the regular Law course in the University proper, from which they will be enabled to graduate with the degree of *hogakushi* (Bachelor of Law) in the same way as the male students.<sup>1</sup> The Imperial Universities of Kyushu, Tohoku, and Hokkaido, it should be added, already admit women as regular students in Law, and the Imperial University in Tokyo did likewise for a time, though the last-named found the arrangement unsatisfactory and therefore dropped it.

In order, however, to appreciate the significance of the changes that are now taking place, it will be well, before proceeding further, to give a brief sketch showing the disadvantages under which Japanese women have had to labour in the past, and how it came about that such handicaps were imposed upon them. Unless this is done, it will be difficult to understand either the causes leading to the women's movement in Japan or the forces which successively tend to impede or assist it.

That Japanese women have, for many centuries past, been regarded as the inferiors of their menfolk, and have been made to suffer both socially and legally accordingly, is not to be gainsaid. Nor can it be denied that they are, even now, the victims of social, political, and legal dis-

<sup>1</sup> The degree of Doctor of Science was conferred on a Japanese woman for the first time on March 31st, 1927. Several other Japanese women hold degrees of one kind or another.



criminations, though they are accorded far more freedom and consideration than were their sisters of feudal times. That women did not always hold a low position in the Japanese social scale is, however, clear from the records of the past. It is hardly necessary to recall, for instance, that Amaterasu, the Sun Goddess, is the most revered of all the Japanese deities, and that Japanese mythology credits her with being the Ancestress of the unbroken line of Emperors. As such, her shrine at Ise is the Mecca of Japan. Similarly, with the possible exception of Jimmu Tenno, the first Emperor of Japan, no Japanese ruler of ancient days is regarded with more awe and veneration than the great Empress Jingo, renowned for her somewhat mythical exploits in connection with the conquest of Korea in the third century of the Christian Era ; and although the introduction of the Salic Law in 1889 now bars the Throne to women, Japan has, in the course of her history, been ruled by ten officially recognised Empresses.

Many other instances could be quoted to show the high regard in which women were held in ancient times. These three, however, must suffice, though it may be noted in passing that there are many stories of women participating in the wars of pre-historic days, both as leaders and in the ranks, and there is plenty of evidence to show that, in those far-off times, Japanese women enjoyed equal rights with men, that they were free to love and marry as they chose, and that there was no difference in social standing between the two sexes.

It was the gradual change in social and economic conditions that tended to lower the status of women to some degree ; but it was not until after the introduction of Chinese and Korean civilisation, and the spread of Buddhism in the sixth century, that women came to be regarded as the actual inferiors of men, and it was not until the publication of the Daiho Laws in A.D. 701, the first attempt at codification in Japan, that this inferiority

was accorded legal recognition. These laws, which were based on the Civil Law of China, discriminated against women in a number of ways and made them definitely inferior to men in the eyes of the Law. Moreover, by introducing, as they did, the Chinese Family System, the right of women to choose their own husbands was henceforth denied them. Marriage, from that time onward, could only take place with the consent of the two families concerned. Henceforth, therefore, both men and women were to lose their individuality and freedom of choice, not only in the matter of marriage but in almost all actions of any importance. From then on, the family became the unit of society, while the individual was forced to obey the legal head of his or her house, instead of being a free agent to do as he or she wished.

From this it will be seen that it was not only the woman whose freedom of action was restricted. The man also was put under restraint. The woman, however, had far more restrictions placed upon her than had the man. Most of these restrictions have remained until quite recently, while some have not been removed even to this day. Especially was this legal discrimination noticeable in the matter of divorce. Thus, while husbands were permitted to divorce their wives if they bore them no son, or if they were unfaithful, talkative, jealous, or lepers, the wife had no reciprocal rights; for neither infidelity, ill-treatment, cruelty, nor disease on the part of the husband entitled the woman to sue for divorce.

Despite these restrictions, and others even more severe imposed in later years, Japan has never been lacking in women of intelligence and force of character. Many of them have wielded immense influence. Thus, in the Nara period (A.D. 710-794) the Court women were all powerful, and in political and administrative influence were no whit the inferiors of men. In the Heian period which followed, women of the upper class, it is true, lost much of their mental and moral vigour; but, with the rise of the

military class to power in the twelfth century, woman again came to occupy an important position in the social organisation of the country. This was in no small part due to Yoritomo, the great warrior-statesman of those days, who, being impressed by the ability of his own wife, Masako, placed a number of able women in high positions of authority. Masako actually directed the administration of the Kamakura Government and controlled the war-like *bushi* after her husband's death, while other women of equal ability were entrusted with tasks of similar importance in the rival Court at Kyoto.

In the important matter of inheritance, Yoritomo likewise showed his broad-minded attitude towards women. With the one stipulation that "a thoroughly deserving eldest son" of a wife or concubine could claim one-fifth of his father's estate, he laid it down that widows were to inherit their husbands' property and enabled them to adopt an heir if childless. This is of interest when we consider the fight that is going on at the present time on this very point, as will be shown later.

Though certain new restrictions were imposed during the Kamakura period, and although, as a social-political unit, women counted for little, as wives and mothers they received the highest respect and esteem, much as did the Roman *matrona* of old. While fathers and husbands were absent on military service, the wives and mothers were given complete control of the household and were, moreover, charged with the important task of educating and guarding the children.

As time went on, however, the position of Japanese women in general became less enviable. According to Buddhistic teaching, women were sinful and therefore inferior to men. This, combined with the rise of the military class—which held that, as men offered their lives in battle, it was the duty of women to sacrifice happiness, comfort, and even life itself for the good of their men-folk—tended to make them ever more subordinate to the male

sex and to hedge them round with all manner of restrictions on their personal liberty.

Then too, constant civil strife helped to develop the family system still further, and in almost direct ratio with this development, women's position, both legally and socially, became lowered. The family was not merely the father, mother, and children, but included grand-parents, cousins, and distant relations, together with their servants and retainers and their families. The larger the "family," the stronger became the position of its head, as all those under him were bound to obey him and could therefore be counted on as his adherents, whenever he required their assistance in fighting a rival. This large family system may therefore be regarded as the outcome of the circumstances existing in those troublous times, for rival lords sought to strengthen their position by such means, and daughters were forced to marry those whose adherence to the family was considered desirable. Love motives were given no consideration at all.

Moreover, in order to ensure that there should be no diminution in the strength of a family on the death of its head, the sole right of inheritance went to the eldest son. If this had not been done, and if, instead, each member of the family had received a share of the estates, there would have been a division of power and property. The family position would then have been weakened proportionately. These facts must be appreciated, therefore, if we are to understand how it came about that, until quite recently, Japanese women had no property rights and that, even now, they labour under great disadvantages in this, as in many other respects.

One way and another, the circumstances of those days made the women of Japan increasingly subservient to, and dependent on, men. Being charged with the education and upbringing of the heir and other children at all times, and being left in control of the whole family and its dependents in the absence of their husbands, the married

women, it is true, held positions of great responsibility ; but, by their very duties, their power was strictly confined to the household. Outside the home circle they held neither rights nor privileges.

It is one of the curious anomalies of modern times that, whereas the present tendency is to grant greater freedom to women, the one duty above all others that, despite their low status, earned for them some measure of respect in feudal days, has now been taken from them. This was the education of the children, especially that of the heir. With the introduction of compulsory education at Government schools, after the re-opening of the country to foreign intercourse in the second half of last century, the mothers were deprived of this important task. While, therefore, they have gained to some extent in the matter of legal rights, they have lost what was formerly one of their greatest, though certainly most onerous, privileges.

It was during the Kamakura period and the troublous times that followed, that the power of Japanese women to bear suffering uncomplainingly gradually became second nature with them. The development of the family system in those days necessitated not only their being restricted to their homes but also absolute fidelity and obedience to their husbands—not from love, but because the strict *samurai* code of honour and duty demanded it. It is this centuries' old tradition and training that has probably done more than anything else to handicap the women's movement in Japan, for it is only the comparatively few who have been able, or willing, to overcome the consequent belief in their own inferiority and to question men's rights to lord it over them. The few who have succeeded in doing so have a hard task before them, to persuade their sisters that the time has come for them to look beyond the horizon of their own immediate family circle and to assert their rights.

At the same time, the fact should not be overlooked that in Japan, as in other countries, poverty makes for equality.

Consequently, the women of the peasant, the artisan, and the small trader class have always enjoyed a greater measure of freedom, and have occupied a relatively higher position, than their sisters of higher birth and breeding, and the wives of such men have shared the counsels of their husbands as well as their toils. As the women of these lower classes form the bulk of the female population, it is by no means lacking in significance that the woman's movement of the present day is tending to lean over to the proletarian parties for support.

The introduction of Buddhism and of Chinese and Korean civilisation, the development of the Family System and the rise of a warrior class, each in its turn helped to place Japanese women at an increasingly great disadvantage to their men folk. It remained for the introduction, or rather diffusion, of Confucianism in the days of the Tokugawa Shogunate (1603 to 1868) to put the finishing touch to their subjection. Buddhism taught that women were sinful. The Family System necessitated their taking second place to men. Confucianism went still further, emphasising, as it did, the reverence and obedience due to all men by women. Iyeyasu, the founder of the Tokugawa Shogunate, was a strong believer in the teachings of the old Chinese sage, and his successors followed in his steps in this respect. Henceforth, therefore, it was not enough that a woman should obey her husband. Till marriage she had to give unquestioning obedience to her father; during her married life her husband was her absolute lord and master, and even her parents-in-law were entitled to greater respect than her own parents; in her husband's absence, or after his death, her sons took his place and commanded her obedience. To obey fathers, husbands, and sons became the standard of morals and ethics, and women were relegated to the position of mere house-keepers.

Even in the matter of infidelity their position, which had been slightly bettered in this respect and raised to a



nearer level with that of men under Yoritomo's *régime*, was made worse than ever, as adultery, in the case of a married woman, became punishable by death.

As though this were not enough, a set of rules of conduct, known as *Onna Daigaku* or "Greater Learning for Women," was drawn up by the followers of Kaibara, a famous teacher of mysogonistic leanings. These rules, which were based on the teachings propounded by this pedagogue, came to be the standard on which women's conduct was henceforth to be based, and have exerted immense influence in impressing Japanese women with a deep sense of their own inferiority to men. While, however, Kaibara taught that women should subject themselves to men, he was not, in reality, such a hide-bound conservative as he is generally painted. Believing, as he did, that women's many shortcomings were due to ignorance and undeveloped intellect, he urged that they should be given such an education as would develop their intellectual powers. With this end in view, he advocated the teaching of such subjects as mathematics and household economy. Thus it may be said that Kaibara, who did so much to complete the subjection of women to men in Japan, laid the foundations of the present day movement for freeing women from their bondage. Up to his time the education of women had been carried on in a somewhat haphazard way in the home, without much attention being paid to the training of the intellect. Nor had it received as much, or as early, attention as in the case of men, or as it should have done. Kaibara, however, caused radical improvements to be made in this respect. Inasmuch, therefore, as it is true that the spread of women's education has exercised a very direct influence in giving impetus to the women's movement in modern times, it may be said that Kaibara helped to bring it about.

When, however, we take into consideration the repression imposed on Japanese womanhood by Buddhist and Chinese teaching for the past fourteen centuries, by

Confucianism for the past three centuries, and by their offshoots as seen in the Family System, the ethics of the warrior class, and the outpourings of Kaibara and other writers of his way of thinking, the wonder is that the women of Japan have never fallen to the level of their sisters in China and other patriarchal countries. The fact nevertheless remains that, despite the discriminatory treatment she has received in the past, the Japanese woman has always been regarded with a certain measure of respect and has, to some extent, remained a power in the land. The probable explanation is that *Shinto*, the national religion of the country, though it taught that obedience and cheerful submission were the greatest of female virtues, nevertheless ensured respect for women by virtue of the fact that female deities were the object of worship. No forecast regarding the prospects of the women's movement in Japan would therefore be complete, unless due consideration was taken of the influence which these forces have exerted, and still are exerting, both on the position and the mental outlook of Japanese women. Buddhism, Confucianism, and Chinese teaching, each tend to lower their status and make them regard themselves as naturally inferior to men. *Shinto*, with its worship of female deities and its high regard for Amaterasu, the Sun Goddess, ensures that, whether inferior, superior, or equal to men, women shall be accorded a certain measure of respect.

With the opening of the country to foreign intercourse in the middle of last century, the impact of western ideas and civilisation naturally had its effect on Japanese womanhood as on all other things Japanese. The education of both sexes was encouraged, and both women and girls were sent to Europe and America, at government or private expense, to study. In so far as the aristocracy was concerned, the Emperor Meiji, in a rescript issued in 1871, laid special emphasis on the desirability of wives, daughters, and sisters accompanying members of the

nobility who went abroad, so that they might "see for themselves how, in the lands they visit, women receive their education, and would also learn the way to bring up their children."

Although the number of women sent to study in foreign lands was necessarily limited, the influence exercised by them in spreading a knowledge of western ideas and thoughts among their sisters in Japan, on their return, was by no means inconsiderable. In this they were assisted by missionaries, teachers, and foreigners of all sorts, while the introduction of foreign books helped still further to disseminate knowledge which was bound to influence their whole outlook on life.<sup>1</sup>

Although many years were to pass before anything in the nature of a serious movement for the emancipation of women was to come into being, one of the first reforms carried out was contained in a decree issued in 1872, whereby the sale or hiring out of girls was forbidden.<sup>2</sup> The rapidity with which the mental outlook of women started to change after the Restoration of the Emperor to power in 1868 is also well illustrated by the fact that, within a few years, a young woman of the *samurai* class had opened a school, whose main object it was to attack the long-established social and family system with a view to easing the lot of her countrywomen. Small success attended this venture, however, as it was frowned upon by the authorities, who forced her to close down. Some years later, in 1885, they had her arrested and put in prison for three years, on account of her active co-operation with the radical elements in the country.

Remembering how this early pioneer in the cause of

<sup>1</sup> For fear of their being influenced adversely, certain books have been banned by the authorities, however, even in recent times. These include a translation of Molière, "because of the lack of respect shown in the plays, by wives towards their husbands, and sons towards parents."

<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, the licensed prostitution system, which has continued to this day, is a glaring proof that this reform has never been properly enforced.

women's rights sought to gain her ends by allying herself with the radical elements of those days, it is perhaps not lacking in significance that, whereas at the outset of the present day movement the majority of those interested in it were educated women of the upper-middle class, increasing interest is now being shown by women of the labouring classes, and the most recent developments in the women's movement in Japan have indicated a decided leaning towards the Left. No less than three women's organisations aiming at female emancipation were formed during the year 1927, each one with proletarian affiliations. A fourth, which came into being in January 1928, definitely pledged itself to the cause of the *Rōdō Nōmintō* (Labour-Farmer Party), the most extreme of the four main proletarian parties existing at that time.<sup>1</sup> Two of these proletarian parties, it may be added, included the grant of the franchise to women amongst their declared policies, and all four used numbers of women speakers to stump the country in their cause during the campaign for the General Elections held that year.

The first three of the four womens' organisations mentioned above were composed largely of "intellectuals" from the cities, especially Tokyo, and did not include women from the rural districts. They were mainly interested in fighting against sex inequality and injustice, and merely allied themselves in this way because the proletarian parties had shown sympathy towards their cause. The fourth organisation, the Proletarian Women's Union, however, was definitely in favour of the proletarian cause as well as of their own, and is said to have been composed largely of working women. This last-named body, it may be added, exists no longer as a separate union, as it was amalgamated with the National Women's

<sup>1</sup> This was shortly before the dissolution of that body by order of the Government, on account of its alleged connection with Communistic elements.

League in January 1929, the two joining together to form the Proletarian Women's League. •

What Miss Kageyama, the pioneer woman agitator who was imprisoned in 1885, failed to do by her school and by her radical activities, has been largely achieved since then by other and more constitutional means. The Family System, it is true, is still a force in the land and, as such, continues to exercise its influence on the position of women. It has, however, been weakened to a considerable extent by the natural workings of modern economic laws and by the progress of industrialisation. Women have, in consequence, acquired a degree of independence, which would have been considered almost unbelievable fifty years ago.

Thus, whereas formerly the family was, to all intents and purposes, a self-contained unit, each member contributing his or her own share to the family prosperity by personal service of one kind or another, for which he or she, in return, received board, lodging, and other similar benefits, modern conditions necessitate individual members going out to work as wage earners. The unity of the family, which was the natural outcome of the old system, when each member was interdependent on all the others, has accordingly been weakened.

This is specially noticeable in the case of women and girls who, having once tasted of the comparative economic independence obtainable by fixed wages from outside sources, are loath to return to the old form of bondage, which practically denied them all freedom of action. Whereas formerly, virtually no women, other than those of the courtesan class, were to be found engaged in work of any kind outside their own home circles, latest statistics show that more than a million and a quarter are now employed in factories, over half-a-million in day labour, in mines, and in the service of transportation and communications,<sup>1</sup> and about 1,100,000 in professional work,

<sup>1</sup> See footnote, page 67.

medical, educational, commercial, and so forth. There are, in addition, some 6,000,000 engaged in agricultural work, and an unstated number helping husbands or parents in small business ventures.

The majority of the women agriculturalists and small business helpers, however, receive no actual wages, as they are working with, and for, their own families, in much the same way as all women did in the hey-day of the old Family System. In return for their labour they are kept by their families, sharing their fortunes and misfortunes proportionately.

It is the nearly three million outside wage-earners who, by their comparative freedom from the old restraints of the Family System, are awakening to a sense of the rights due to them. By the very nature of their work, they find themselves brought into direct contact with men and, in consequence, are no longer so content to bow down to the dictates of their parents as to whom they are to marry. The old Confucian teaching that the sexes must be segregated after the age of seven, and that girls must not be allowed to leave their homes after the age of ten, made them willing enough to let others choose their husbands for them in former times, as they had but little acquaintance with men, other than those of their own immediate family ; <sup>1</sup> but the greater freedom of intercourse resulting from present-day conditions has tended to alter all this. Moreover, many of them, being now economically independent in consequence of being wage-earners, prefer to remain single rather than place themselves at the beck and call of conservative-minded husbands, whereas formerly it was considered a disgrace to remain unmarried and, being economically dependent on men, they had no alternative but to marry.

<sup>1</sup> Though Confucianism advocated the segregation of the sexes, and although concubinage was formerly permitted, the *harim* and the *zenana* or their equivalents have never been known in Japan ; nor has there ever been the same strict seclusion as that imposed in Mahomedan countries.



Then, too, contact with the outside world is making them question the reason why they should receive less wages than men for the same work, and the spread of education makes them ask why the Law should discriminate against them in such matters as inheritance, divorce, and political rights, and set different standards of morality for men and women. Even the cinema, with its depiction of the love and respect accorded to women in western countries, plays its part—sometimes, it must be admitted, with results which are not wholly to the good of society.

In this matter of questioning, they have won the sympathy of an increasingly large number of men, as well as that of a large section of the vernacular Press, and improvements are already in evidence. Thus, as already noted, the former inequalities in the matter of divorce were dealt a severe blow in 1927, by the ruling of the Supreme Court in the case of the woman who brought an action against her husband on the grounds of his infidelity. Similarly, political rights, which formerly were withheld entirely, are now being accorded to women who, since 1922, have been permitted to attend political meetings and take an active part in political discussions.

Then too, there is the Inheritance Law, which constitutes the backbone of the Japanese Family System. A bill, enabling certain amendments to be put into effect as from April 1st, 1928, was to have been presented at the 54th Session of the Diet. The dissolution of the Diet on January 21st that year, however, necessitated its postponement, and although more than two years have passed since then, the proposed bill has not yet been introduced. The reason for this delay appears to be that the proposals contained in it were so fundamental in nature that further consideration was considered advisable. If, however, approval is finally given, it will go far to improve the legal rights of women in Japan.

The proposed new law is said to render it obligatory,

in cases where inheritance is decided by the will of the chief of the family, that the consent of his wife, if he has one, should be obtained. The old law contains no such stipulation. Furthermore, in the case of a husband being adopted into the family of his wife through marriage, as often happens in Japan, the wife is to be regarded as head of the family, unless the husband has any valid objection. This also is a reversal of the present law.

It is likewise proposed to make brothers, sisters, and the widow of a testator joint heirs to the headship of families and to estates, thus abolishing the present monopolistic system, which came into being in feudal days for reasons already specified. This is certainly a step in the right direction, for under the existing law a widow is denied the right to succeed to her husband's estate, unless otherwise stated in his will ; and a son, by a woman who is not the man's wife, is given preference to a legitimate daughter in the matter of inheritance, provided the son has been legally recognised by the man.<sup>1</sup> True, a widow may, even now, have the title of the property in her name, if her deceased husband has no brothers or sisters ; but she only holds it in trust. She cannot use any of it, even though the amount increases under her management, for it must all go to the children. Moreover, she cannot marry again unless another heir is appointed to whom all the property rights go. There are even difficulties in the way of her proving her right to property owned by herself prior to her marriage or acquired during her married life, though her husband, during his lifetime, has the right to use such property. The new law proposes to alter all this.

It will be seen, therefore, that the legal, social, and political rights of Japanese women, which formerly were either non-existent or else very greatly curtailed, are

<sup>1</sup> Under the present law, a man can legitimise a child of his own born of a woman who is not his wife, though under the new law it is proposed to make the wife's consent necessary before this process of legitimisation can be made effective.

gradually being recognised. In part this is due to the spread of education ; in part it is due to changing economic and social conditions. Japanese sensitiveness to foreign opinion has also had much to do with the changing attitude of the country as a whole towards the treatment of women, for the Japanese as a race, despite, or perhaps because of, the assumption of superiority which some of them are apt to adopt at times, are always anxious to rectify, as far as possible, anything which they consider tends to lower them in the eyes of western nations. Knowing, therefore, that one of the tests of civilisation, according to the western viewpoint, is the treatment of women, there is a growing desire on the part of educated Japanese to remove those discriminations which are most likely to call forth reproach. This is undoubtedly one of the main factors in the movement aiming at the abolition of licensed prostitution, and it is likewise accountable to no small extent for the movement in support of women's rights generally.

In so far as the question of licensed prostitution is concerned, a question which is closely related to that of woman's emancipation in Japan, this susceptibility to foreign opinion is well exemplified by the following quotation from the *Osaka Mainichi* in an article dealing with the investigations carried out by the League of Nations. Similar sentiments, it may be said, are frequently expressed by all the more reputable units of the Japanese Press.

“ That our Land of the Rising Sun should be classed among countries in which the White Slave problem is ‘ somewhat different ’ ought to be a challenge to our pride and patriotism. We are happy to say that Japan is now an unqualified signatory to the agreement on the White Slave traffic regulation, as seen by the fact that the Privy Council, at the time of its ratification, turned down the reservations awarded to Japan. A further clarification of the actual status in Japan is necessary to eliminate the misconception.”

Press sympathy and susceptibility to foreign opinion, however, are not enough. What is needed to give the woman's movement the necessary impetus, is for the women themselves to back it up. Up to the present, this support has not been forthcoming to the extent it should if real headway is to be made, as centuries of subjugation and long tradition and training, have left the bulk of Japanese women disinclined to question the rights of men to privileges denied to themselves, or to challenge their own alleged inferiority to men. Such rights as they have achieved during the past few decades have been due to change of circumstances rather than to active agitation on their own part, and it is only within the last few years that any real organised attempt, even on a small scale, has been made to obtain for themselves equal rights with men.

As far back as the closing years of last century, the famous educator, Fukuzawa, had come out in favour of improving women's lot and, by the revision of the Civil Law in 1898, women's personal rights were given more recognition than formerly. Polygamy was made illegal ; to force a woman to marry against her will was also forbidden ; women over the age of twenty-five were given the right to marry the men of their own choice, even without the consent of the family head ; women were allowed to possess property of their own ; married women, with the permission of their husbands, were permitted to engage in business of their own. These were the main points in the new law by which women were accorded rights which, though still less than those of their men-folk, had hitherto been withheld altogether.

It was not, however, until 1907 that the first women's organisation was brought into being. Even then, the body thus formed was entirely divorced from any political leanings and had nothing to do with improving the position of women in Japan. This was the Women's Patriotic Association, which now boasts of a membership of half-a-

million. The same was true with regard to the Federation of Women's Societies in Western Japan (*Zen Kansai Fujin Rengokai*), when it was formed in 1919, though it is not lacking in significance that this organisation, which is said to have nearly 3,000,000 members at the present time, has acknowledged itself to be in sympathy with the women's suffrage movement since 1927. Efforts are now being made to win both it and the Young Women's Association (membership 1,340,000) to give active support to the movement for women's rights.

The first organisation aiming definitely at awakening women to a proper sense of their position and the rights due to them, was the *Seitoshu*, or Blue Stocking Society, which was formed in 1911. It aimed not only at putting women on an equality with men in the matter of rights and privileges, but also, and more especially, at developing the talents and genius of women. In order to show their defiance of the male sex, however, the members purposely went out of their way to shock the susceptibilities of their countrymen. Smoking and drinking in public were indulged in flagrantly, and free love was practised. As a result, the organisation soon gained odium for itself and disappeared, after an existence of barely three years.

Reprehensible as this conduct may have been, it set people thinking and gave an impetus to the feminist movement. It thereby helped to pave the way for the creation of the *Shinfujin Kyokai*, or New Women's Society, the first women's organisation of a political character in Japan. This came into being in 1920 and aimed at obtaining higher education for women, better treatment for women labourers, women's suffrage, improvement in the legal position of women, and vocational equality with men.

One of the first results of its agitation was that the ban on women attending political meetings was withdrawn two years later.

It was shortly after this that the *Shinfujin Kyokai*

broke up ; but, with the removal of this ban, five new organisations were formed. The good work done by these bodies at the time of the Great Earthquake in 1923 gained public recognition, and did much to strengthen the movement. The Women's Suffrage League was formed in December the following year, and now, by means of lectures, the distribution of pamphlets, and the wide circulation of a large number of women's magazines, the aims and objects of those working for feminine rights are made known to an ever increasing number of women throughout the country. How little these aims and objects were understood, even five years ago, however, is shown by the fact that, during the first few months of its existence, this league was regarded by many as a Socialist organisation advocating dangerous principles, and the organisers received numerous threatening letters from reactionaries.

From what has been written above it will be seen that, whereas the women's movement in Japan was originally confined to social work—for example, the protection of children, succouring the poor and needy, relief of families of soldiers killed in action, and rescue work among the licensed prostitutes—it is gradually assuming a political tinge, with women's emancipation as its aim. This tendency has become all the more pronounced since the passage of the Manhood Suffrage Bill in 1925 and the subsequent birth of proletarian parties.

It would be incorrect to imagine that the women of Japan are, as a whole, hungering for the vote. Those who really want it are still few in number, and the interest shown in national politics by the bulk of Japanese women is but small. There is, however, a growing interest in local and social legislation, and an increasing demand for a voice in municipal affairs. An investigation committee has recently been appointed to consider the question of granting civil rights to women in the six leading cities, and much significance is attached to a speech made by the



Premier, Mr. Hamaguchi, at the Mejiro Women's University on December 23rd last year (1929). Declaring that "the problem of women's suffrage has now entered the stage of practical consideration," he went on to tell of the many problems with which the nation is confronted at the present time. In order to solve these problems, he said, there are various methods that could be used, such as the practice of economy, purification of politics, moral training, etc. "But none of these," he added significantly, "can be carried out without the support of the female portion of the population, which comprises about 50 per cent. of the nation."

Mr. Hamaguchi, besides being Premier, is President of the *Minseito*, the present Government Party. In speaking thus, it may be presumed, therefore, that he was but voicing the sentiments of many of his followers. Nor, for that matter, does this sentiment appear to be confined to the *Minseito*. The *Seiyukai* too, the leading Opposition Party in the Lower House, is said to admit the justification of the demand for women's participation in local politics, recognising as they do, that municipal projects are frequently of such a nature as to affect vitally the interest of the home and of the housewife.<sup>1</sup> They are, therefore, proposing to recognise the right of women, who are heads of families and over thirty years of age, to vote in the municipal elections. Further than this they are not prepared to go as yet, though indications are not lacking to show that there are many politicians, of all shades, who realise that, sooner or later, women will have to be accorded the same political rights as men, and that it would be poor policy therefore, as one Japanese writer has

<sup>1</sup> Since submitting the MS. of this book for publication, a bill, proposing the grant of civic rights to women, has passed the Lower House with the support of members of all parties. The bill was subsequently shelved by the Peers, but not before the Government had placed itself on record as being in favour of a limited franchise for women in municipal elections without the right to run for election. A Government-sponsored measure to this effect is likely, therefore, to be introduced in the next session of the Diet (December 1930—March 1931).

put it, “. . . to offend the whole new generation of women, who to-morrow will have the right to vote or veto any or every male candidate for the Diet.”<sup>1</sup>

So far as the national vote is concerned, however, the demand is still too small to merit serious consideration. It is generally conceded, therefore, that the first step must be to raise the social position of women, rather than grant them an extension of political rights, and that equal rights of property are more urgently required than equality of political rights. In arguing thus, the case of Great Britain, where, in order to make their social position safe, women's property rights were asserted before political rights were extended, is quoted as an example to be followed.

That steps are being taken with this end in view should be clear from what has been written above. One by one the old discriminations imposed by the Family System, by Chinese and Buddhist teaching in general and Confucian ethics in particular, and by the *samurai* code, are being abolished, and Japanese women are being accorded rights and privileges, which for centuries past have been denied to them. It was largely due to the conditions of the times and to force of circumstances that they were deprived, little by little, of their freedom, and placed so much under the thumb of their men-folk. It is largely due to the changing circumstances of the past half-century, and to other outside causes, that they are gradually regaining that freedom. In the ordinary course of events therefore, the next fifteen or twenty years are likely to see the bulk of the old discriminatory treatment removed.

If both the authorities and the women themselves are wise, they will let things take their natural course and will use no artificial means, either to retard or expediate the movement unduly. Any attempt to slow it up unreasonably would probably only result in the appearance of militant methods on the part of a section of the women ;

<sup>1</sup> “ Santaro ” in the *Japan Advertiser* of February 23rd, 1928.

for Japanese women, despite their usual docility, have been lacking neither in spirit nor in courage. When once aroused, they are seen to be, like "the female of the species" the World over, "more deadly than the male." It was a party of fisherwomen who started the famous Rice Riots in Japan in 1918, and Japanese history is filled with instances showing what the women of the country can do when roused.

On the other hand, any attempt to hasten the emancipation movement, without good reason, would result in too great a jolt to the whole social fabric of Japan. To give them the vote at this stage would be to place a weapon in the hands of the women before they were sufficiently trained, either to accept their new responsibilities or to use their new privileges in the best interests of themselves and of their country. "Hurry slowly" seems therefore to be the best advice, and "Hurry slowly" does, in fact, seem to be the motto of the accredited leaders of the movement and of the country's legislators alike.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE GROWTH OF REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT

(PART I)

THERE is a well-known story of a visitor to England, who was greatly impressed by the fine, smooth, grass lawns he saw at Hampton Court and elsewhere. On asking how such beautiful turf was obtained, he was told it was really quite a simple matter. All that was required was a process of constant rolling, watering, and cutting for a few hundred years.

There may not be much resemblance between grass lawns and parliamentary government, but there is one thing they seem to have in common. In each case, time and careful attention are required, if perfection is to be attained. A lawn of sorts can be produced in a comparatively short space of time, and a country can establish a parliamentary system of government in place of a feudal form of administration. If, however, the site chosen for the lawn was formerly overgrown with bamboo grass or weed, it will require many years of care and attention to eliminate all traces of the former rank growths and to produce a perfect stretch of smooth turf in its stead. Similarly, when a parliamentary system of government is substituted for centuries of feudalism, it would be surprising if traces of the old-established form of administration did not make their appearance, in one form or another, for many a long year after the drastic change had nominally been completed.

In order to understand Japanese politics and evaluate

their influence as a social force, it is necessary to bear this in mind. Much that is otherwise inexplicable then becomes clear, and the mistake of judging Japanese political events and manoeuvres by present day British standards will be avoided. In England, parliamentary government has evolved gradually and naturally over a period of centuries. In Japan an alien system of government has been transplanted bodily and imposed upon a feudal form of administration, which had flourished for many hundreds of years and which was still in force in the boyhood days of numbers of Japanese still living. Less than sixty years have gone by since feudalism was abolished in Japan, and less than two-thirds of that time has passed since the country was granted a Constitution and given a parliamentary system of government. The existence of a bi-cameral Diet, of political parties, manhood suffrage, secret ballots, and all the many other outward and visible signs of parliamentary government, should not, therefore, delude the observer into the belief that the people have anything like as much say in the matter of how they are governed as, for example, have the people of Great Britain.

The people of any country, it has often been said, get the government they deserve. This is well exemplified in the case of Japan. In feudal times, political mindedness among the people was unknown.<sup>1</sup> A paternally despotic form of government was therefore what they required, and it is what they got. The eventual abolition of feudalism was due in no way to popular outcry, but was brought about quietly, and without bloodshed, by the calm and considered action of far-sighted statesmen, in

<sup>1</sup> Prior to the abolition of feudalism in 1871, the government of rural communities had been social rather than political, government by family councils rather than by political organs. Moreover the people, as we understand the word to-day, had neither political rights nor privileges. These, in so far as they existed, were reserved entirely for the Shogunate and Court officials, and for the Clan lords and *samurai*, or warrior class.

order to unify the country against foreign aggression and to make Japan mistress in her own house. It was a revolutionary change, but it was a revolution from the top and not from the bottom. It would have been fatal therefore, to substitute, at one stroke, government by the people for the paternal despotism to which the country had been accustomed for centuries past. It was necessary first to educate the masses politically and, meantime, to retain complete power and authority in the hands of a small but able oligarchy. Little by little, as the political education of the people advanced sufficiently to fit them for, and entitle them to, a greater measure of responsibility, this strict control was relaxed, and rights and privileges were conceded. To some extent this process was intentional; to some extent it was accidental. Be that as it may, the political history of Japan during the past sixty years shows that successive rights and privileges have been granted to the people in almost direct ratio to the spread of political education and the growth of political mindedness amongst them. This process still continues, and must be borne in mind by those who seek to understand the whys and wherefores of Japanese politics.

If all the rights and privileges demanded by the youthful agitators of the time had been granted immediately after the abolition of feudalism in 1871, a dangerous weapon would have been placed in their hands, a weapon dangerous both to themselves and to the State, for they would not have known how to make proper use of those political gifts. Fortunately, the statesmen of those days realised this, and had the moral courage to refuse the demands made of them in the sacred names of liberty and reform. If, at times, their refusal tended too much towards conservatism and reaction, and was accompanied by undue severity and repression, their policy on the whole was sound. Periods of repression were followed by periods of liberality, and little by little concessions were made to



the popular demands.<sup>1</sup> But never was this done before it was felt that the education and understanding of the people had advanced sufficiently to keep them from abusing, or making wrongful use of, these rights and privileges.

This same process has been followed more or less consistently since the outset. First, after several unsuccessful attempts to stave off the inevitable, local popular government was given a trial, and village, town, city and prefectural assemblies were established. Then came the promise of a national assembly and the establishment of the Imperial Diet, consisting of an Upper and a Lower House, the members of the latter being elected by popular vote. With a strictly limited electorate at the outset, in which agricultural interests strongly predominated, the franchise has gradually been extended, until now it is held by all males, with a few necessary exceptions, of twenty-five years and over, an important section of the present electorate being the newly-evolved middle class, consisting of manufacturers and salaried men.

While, however, all the major demands have now been conceded to the people, the process of parliamentary evolution still continues, and many more rights and privileges will have to be accorded before the standard reached in England can be attained. Apart from such obvious limitations as the withholding of the franchise for women, many of the concessions already made are restricted by provisos in the terms of the Constitution, the significance

<sup>1</sup> Notably by the establishment of the *Kogisho* in 1869 and, after its dissolution, of the *Chihō Chiokwan Kaigi* in 1874. The *Kogisho* was the first ostensible assembly of representatives of the people, but in reality was composed entirely of *samurai* nominated by the clan lords. It was purely an advisory, or consultative, organ of the Government, and had no power to legislate. Its successor, the *Chihō Chiokwan Kaigi*, was likewise unrepresentative, being no more than an arbitrarily convened assembly of bureaucrats. Prefectural assemblies were established in 1878, and city, town, and village assemblies two years later. The promise of a popularly elected national assembly was given in 1881 and was put into effect in 1890, when the Imperial Diet assembled for the first time.

of which is not at first sight apparent. The Government, for example, is not responsible to the popularly-elected House of Representatives but to the Throne, and the Diet has, with not a little truth, been described as "nothing more than an impotent debating society." When the late Prince Ito drew up the terms of the Constitution, he was, in fact, so fearful of putting too much power in the hands of the people, that he made it possible for the Government of the country to be virtually independent of the Diet. One loophole only was left open. This was the clause ruling that the Diet should exercise control over the Budget. With this one exception, the party or parties representing the Opposition are practically powerless. It is, however, an important exception and has played an important part in the political history of the past forty years. In this right to exercise control over national expenditure, the Opposition in the Diet have their one effective weapon of attack, for they can, by refusing to vote supplies, force on a dissolution. The question of finance has therefore furnished the predominating note in almost every parliamentary session, as the Opposition makes full use of this power and generally attacks the budget on principle, not so much on account of actual disapproval but in order to embarrass the Government.

Even in the matter of finance, however, the Diet's power is really more limited than might appear from what has been said above. The Constitution provides that, in the event of dissolution being forced on before the estimates have been approved, the Budget for the previous year is re-inforced automatically. The Government, therefore, can never be placed in the invidious position of having no funds on which to draw. Nor is this the only safeguard, for, if necessary, the Premier can advise the Emperor to issue an Imperial Rescript, expressing his desire that the Diet consent to the passage of the Budget. On two occasions, in 1893 and again in 1901, opposition

has been swept aside by this means,<sup>1</sup> for a rescript issued in the name of the Emperor cannot be questioned.

While it is seldom that an Imperial Rescript impinges upon either administrative or legislative matters of State, the Constitution provides for the issue of Imperial Ordinances, which have the effect of laws, when occasion demands. The Government's ability to make use of such ordinances to enforce its wishes, makes it virtually all-powerful, at least in theory, as it can, if it wishes, enforce almost any legislation by this means, at least temporarily.<sup>2</sup> While, however, there is no doubt that the use of such measures has frequently been abused by those in power, no government could, in practice, afford to fortify its actions in this way too often or too blatantly. The people of Japan are prepared to put up with a lot from those who rule the country in the name of the Emperor, but history has shown more than once that there is a limit beyond which the rulers can only go at their own risk.

For that matter, the Emperor himself is, in theory, absolute and has the power to veto any legislation passed by the two Houses of the Diet. In practice, however, he scrupulously avoids exercising his rights in this respect. Instead, like the King of England, he acts purely as the ceremonial head of the State.

The fact nevertheless remains, that the freedom of the House of Representatives is so circumscribed by the terms of the Constitution that the Government, if it wishes to do so, can legislate independently of the Diet, whereas the Diet is unable to carry out any legislation against the will of the Government. Not only can the people's

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Uyehara's, "The Political Development of Japan 1867-1909," p. 200.

<sup>2</sup> Article VIII of the Constitution lays it down that "The Emperor, in consequence of an urgent necessity to maintain public safety or to avert public calamities, issues, when the Imperial Diet is not sitting, Imperial Ordinances in the place of Law." It is, however, stipulated that, "Such Imperial Ordinances are to be laid before the Imperial Diet at its next session, and when the Diet does not approve the said Ordinances, the Government shall declare them to be invalid for the future."

representatives be over-ruled by the issue of an imperial ordinance. They can have their legislation brought to nought by the veto of the Upper House, and whereas the Lower House can be dissolved, the House of Peers is not subject to dissolution.<sup>1</sup>

The Japanese Upper House, it should be explained, differs in many respects from the British House of Lords. Out of a total of nearly a thousand peers in the country, only about one-fifth hold seats in the Upper Chamber.<sup>2</sup> Of these, only the higher orders hold their seats by right of rank; the counts, viscounts and barons retain their seats for a limited number of years only, and are selected merely as representatives of those particular orders. Nor is the Upper House composed entirely of peers. Roughly one half of the membership is made up of commoners, men of erudition or those who have rendered distinguished services to the State, nominated by the Emperor, and men selected from amongst the highest tax-payers in the country. There is no equivalent of the Conservative peer or the Liberal peer as in England, and although the members of the Upper House are split up into various parties, these parties are social rather than political in nature.

The most influential of these groups is the *Kenkyukai* and, until a very few years ago, the government of the day generally considered it expedient to include one or more of its members in the Cabinet, in order to obtain support for its own measures in the Upper House. The *Kenkyukai*, on its part, regarded an alliance of this kind with the Ministry in power as equally advantageous, as it served to preclude the likelihood of any drastic reform, entailing

<sup>1</sup> Owing to the heavy expenses incurred and the disturbance caused to trade and industry by a general election, the threat of dissolution is often sufficient to bring about a compromise between the Government and the Opposition parties in the Lower House.

<sup>2</sup> All class distinctions were abolished shortly after the Restoration, but the year 1884 saw the rehabilitation of the nobility in its present form.

the curtailment of the powers of the Upper House, being favoured by the Government. The Upper House has, in fact, served from the outset as an effective check to the passage of too radical legislation by the Lower House, and has generally supported the Government, whenever the elected representatives of the people have attempted to strike a blow at the bureaucracy and to get too much power into their own hands. With the substitution of super-party government by party government in the past few years, however, a change of attitude is already discernible, and future developments will be watched with interest.<sup>1</sup>

Now that party government appears to have come to stay, it stands to reason, of course, that the power of the Diet must tend to increase. The fact nevertheless remains that, sitting as it does for but two months in the year, its ability to curb the activities of the Government is strictly limited.<sup>2</sup> For the remaining ten months of the year, the Government is free to carry on practically without let or hinderance, without being subject to hostile attack in either Chamber. Opinions are divided as to whether this is to the good of the country or not. To judge by the disorderly conduct and irresponsible actions of so many of the people's representatives during the short annual sessions of the Diet, it is perhaps just as well that the Government is left free to carry out the administration of the country for the major part of the year without interference. Debates within the Cabinet itself are generally marked by a sincere desire to do what is considered best

<sup>1</sup> An ironical commentary on the substitution of super-party by party government is afforded by the recent denunciation of this change by the veteran Liberal, Yukio Ozaki, who has, from the outset, been noted for his unflinching championship of constitutional government. As recently as January 1930, he launched an attack on the corruptness of the leading political parties, and asserted that the only hope of purifying politics lay in a temporary return to super-party government.

<sup>2</sup> Owing to the short duration of the yearly Diet session, dozens of bills are generally railroaded through at the last moment, with little or no discussion.

for the country. Debates in the Diet are all too often the occasion for a mutual exchange of highly-spiced invective and recrimination between the leading parties in the Lower House, each side determined to block the measures proposed by the other, quite irrespective of the true merits of the case. Except in the cases of real national emergency, when, be it said to their credit, all thought of party is dropped and political friends and foes combine to show a solid front, party interests take precedence over all else. The true interests of the country come out a very poor second. It is perhaps just as well, therefore, that the Government is left free to carry on by itself for the greater portion of the year without these unsettling diversions, though it is conceivable that, if Diet sessions were of greater duration, the stormy, and often disgraceful, scenes to which they are now subjected would cease, or at least diminish.

A number of factors tending to render the House of Representatives little better than "an impotent debating society" have now been noted. There are others besides. One more example, however, must suffice. This is the position of the Privy Council. Unlike the actions of the Cabinet, those of the Privy Council can not be obstructed in the Diet. As, however, all Cabinet members are *ex officio* members of the Privy Council, they play an important part in its deliberations, and can at times prevail upon the Council to act in accordance with their will. It is possible, therefore, for the Government to make use of the Privy Council, either to add special dignity and weight to their actions or to evade responsibility. On the other hand, it is well to note that the influence of the Privy Council is such, that it has brought about the fall of more than one Cabinet in recent years.

From what has been written above it will be seen that, in theory at least, the power of the Government is almost unlimited. The Constitution which has given it this power, has, in fact, been described with some degree of



truth as "a document embodying Japanese traditional political principles under the cloak of representative institutions."<sup>1</sup> There is plenty of evidence to show that the late Prince Ito, in drawing up its terms, intended that it should be so. He fully appreciated the necessity of assuaging the growing demand for popular government, but he conscientiously believed that, for the good of the country, an all-powerful government was essential, as he did not consider that public opinion was necessarily either correct or wise. It was a clever compromise therefore on his part, to enable the people to elect their own representatives and give them as much rein as possible, while at the same time, by an elaborate system of checks, leaving the Government free to prevent legislation considered detrimental to the country's interests, or to enforce legislation of its own when necessary.

In effecting this compromise, Ito believed it would be possible for the Cabinet to remain independent of the political parties and, therefore, of the electorate as well. A few years' experience of the actual working of the new system, however, served to convince him that he was wrong, and that an alliance with one or other of the principal parties in the Lower House was advisable. To understand how this came about, and to appreciate the subsequent development leading to the position as it is to-day, it is necessary at this point to trace briefly the growth of the political party system. The history of this evolution is of special interest at the present time, as it has many points in common with that of the labour or, as the Japanese prefer to call it, proletarian movement, which is now taking place.

For the first few years subsequent to the Restoration of 1868, the Government of the country was in the hands of those who had worked hardest to bring it about. These leaders, drawn mainly from the powerful clans of Satsuma,

<sup>1</sup> "The Political Development of Japan 1867-1909" by G. E. Uyehara, p. 119.

Choshu, Hizen, and Tosa, were all equally sincere in their desire to see the country unified. But after the last traces of the old Tokugawa Shogunate form of rule had been removed, differences arose among themselves as to the best way to bring about that unification which was their common aim. The military clique in the Government advocated a policy of overseas expansion and aggression, in order to divert the minds of the warlike *samurai* element from internal affairs and give them occupation suitable to their taste. The civilian members, on the other hand, considered that the first essential was to carry out the social and financial readjustment of the country, and to stabilise the domestic situation, before embarking on any policy of military aggrandisement. Had it not been for this split between the two sections concerned, the probability is, that the subsequent agitation for the establishment of a representative system of government would have been postponed considerably.

As a result of this conflict of views, the military element left the Government and, in order to embarrass it, started to demand, paradoxical though it may seem, that a representative system of government should be established. In this campaign they were soon joined by the liberals of those days who, with the opening of the country to foreign intercourse a few years previously, had quickly settled down to imbibe all the latest western political theories of the day. It mattered little that these theories were but imperfectly understood. They served as battle-cries, and soon the young bloods of the country were voicing the well-worn western tags of: "No taxation without representation," "Liberty and Reform," "Government of the people, by the people, for the people," and other similar catch phrases.

The vernacular Press, which had come into existence but a few years before and had, at first, been a somewhat servile instrument of the Government, now turned against it and took up the cause of those urging popular repre-

sentation.<sup>1</sup> So violent did some of the newspaper attacks become, and so great was their effect in stirring up the more radical elements of the country, that the Government felt compelled to impose drastic Press laws, and to adopt repressive measures against persons organising or attending political meetings. Subsequent revisions of these laws have wavered between more drastic treatment and greater leniency, according to time and circumstance ; but the general effect has been to retard political progress and, in not a few instances, to foster the violence which they have sought to suppress.

Curiously enough, the agitators, against whom the earlier of these successive laws and revisions were directed, countered with the charge that the officials were trying to usurp the rights of the Throne and that the Government showed lack of respect to the Emperor. The Government, for its part, contended that the shoe was on the other foot, and that the agitators were dangerous radicals and revolutionaries, seeking to change the whole form of society. That some of the agitators merited this reproach is undeniable ; but, in view of present day radicalism in Japan, it is well to bear in mind, that many of those who suffered imprisonment and repression for their radical views in the 'seventies and 'eighties of last century, were destined to become the most respected political and social leaders of the country a few years later. It would occasion no very great surprise therefore, if history, in this case, repeats itself. It may well be that the Japanese "radicals" of to-day, who are undergoing similar persecution, will produce some of the leaders of the country ten or twenty years hence. There is no doubt that many of them are, like those of forty and fifty years ago, merely youthful enthusiasts, whose extreme views will be tempered down

<sup>1</sup> In this demand for representative government, the Press and the liberal elements aimed at getting the power out of the hands of the powerful clansmen. The military element, being clansmen themselves, merely wished to substitute one set of clansmen for another.

as they become older and more level-headed, provided the iron has not entered too deeply into their souls under the severity of the repressive measures adopted against them.<sup>1</sup>

This, however, is a digression from recounting the growth of the Japanese political parties, though it has an important bearing on the political development as a whole. It cannot therefore be passed unnoted. But to return to the early days of the constitutional movement.

As the agitation for popular representation increased, political associations were formed for the purpose of spreading a knowledge of political science and propagating the idea of representative institutions. Out of these associations there sprang, in due course, the beginnings of the party system ; and here again we find a parallel with the movements that have been taking place during the past few years. The leading spirits of the movement for popular representation in the 'seventies and 'eighties of last century, as has been shown, were regarded as dangerous radicals and, like many of those taking part in the proletarian movement of to-day, were treated as such. Similarly, just as the grant of universal manhood suffrage in 1925 helped to quieten the demands of the proletarian leaders and to crystalize the movement, so too did the Imperial Decree of 1881, promising the establishment of a national assembly in 1890, serve to pacify the agitators of those days and stabilise the movement for popular representation. In each instance, there was an immediate change from violence to constitutional methods. In each case, the concession made to the people was followed by the formation of numerous political parties.

For that matter, the comparison can be carried further still, for the Liberal, Progressive, Imperialist and other parties formed in the 'eighties, were every bit as numerous and as unstable as the Farmer-Labour, Peasants', Social-Democrat, and other similar proletarian parties, that have sprung into existence since the grant of Manhood Suffrage

<sup>1</sup> See p. 78. regarding the severity of the Peace Preservation Law.

five years ago. Not only were they as numerous and unstable at the outset ; they were also, like the newly-formed proletarian groups, continually hampering their own cause by their inability to co-operate with one another. Like them too, they had no representation in the Government at the start, and their party platforms were filled with vague generalities.

In considering the possibilities and probabilities of the present day proletarian movement in Japan, and the part that its leaders are likely to play in the political development and governance of the country in the years to come, it is necessary to bear in mind the comparisons noted above. If the similarities in the opening stages of the two movements, the constitutional and the proletarian, are any criterion, it seems reasonable to anticipate that the process of development in each case will be much the same. It will be well, therefore, to trace out the gradual evolution of the *Minseito* and *Seiyukai*, the two principal parties in the Diet to-day, from the conglomeration of small parties that came into existence after the promise of a national assembly given in 1881.

## CHAPTER X

### THE GROWTH OF THE REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT

(PART II)

LIKE certain of the more radical proletarian groups in the past three or four years, some of the earlier parties in the constitutional movement were dissolved by order, after a brief existence. The others had a succession of ups and downs, some of them dissolving of their own accord and reappearing in different form later, while others either amalgamated or broke up altogether. By the time the first session of the Diet was called, the *Jiyūtō* (Liberal), from which has sprung the present day *Seiyūkai*, and the *Kaishintō* (Progressives), in which the *Minseitō* of to-day has its origin, were the two leading parties in the country. Owing, however, to government interference at the elections, they held barely sixty seats in the House between them.

Interference of this kind, it should be noted, has been a feature of Japanese elections ever since. The only difference is, that forty years ago it was these two parties and other anti-government groups that suffered from it. Nowadays it is the proletarians that are made to suffer most in this respect, although, thanks to the powers conferred upon the Home Minister, all candidates of parties unfavourable to the government in power are apt to suffer to some extent. It is, in fact, one of the weaknesses of the Japanese system, that prefectural governorships and the posts of local chiefs of police, both of which come under the jurisdiction of the Home Minister, are political appointments. A change of government, therefore, gene-



rally means a change of governors and police chiefs. It is perhaps but human nature that these men, in order to retain their jobs, should do all in their power to assist the government that appointed them, to win the elections. As it is their duty to control the elections, it is a simple matter for them to interfere in a way favourable to the Government. This fact does much to explain why it is that the party in power at the time of a general election in Japan invariably heads the polls.

Returning, however, to the gradual development of the party system. As the years went on, and election followed election, the Liberals and the Progressives came to occupy the premier position, both inside the House and out. Although occasionally acting in alliance, they were generally, and still remain (though in greatly changed forms and under different names), in opposition to one another.

While this almost constant rivalry between these two leading parties has brought about something resembling a two-party system, the composition of the Lower House has, from the outset, been remarkable for its large number of minor groups and self-styled Independents. In this respect, it has resembled its French, rather than its British, counterpart. There has, however, been a noteworthy tendency in recent years for the number of Independents and members of minor bodies to decrease. Thus, the first session of the Diet opened in 1890 with no less than nine groups or parties represented, the largest single group consisting of Independents, who numbered 69 in all. Much the same phenomenon was common to all the sessions for many years subsequently. Since 1915, however, Independents and members belonging to the lesser groups have steadily declined in number, and never has this diminution been more marked than in the elections held in February this year (1930). In the 1915 elections, the *Minseitō* (or *Kenseikai* as it was called at that time) and the *Seiyūkai* returned a total of 256 successful candidates between them, while Independents and others accounted

for 125. The 1917 elections resulted in the return of only 97 candidates outside the two main parties. In 1920 this number was reduced to 73. In 1928 it fell to 35; and in the elections just held, only 19 candidates belonging neither to the *Minseitō* nor to the *Seiyūkai* secured seats in the Diet.<sup>1</sup> The 1924 elections, it is true, saw three big parties in the field, and the number of Independents and members of minor groups rose slightly, to 83. This, however, was in the nature of a freak phenomenon, and was due partly to a temporary split in the *Seiyūkai* ranks and partly to the unusual conditions brought about by the Great Earthquake of the previous year. Generally speaking, therefore, it may be said that the results of the elections held during the past fifteen years have shown a decided preference on the part of the electorate for a two-party system and a growing dislike for Independents and minor groups. How the appearance of proletarian representatives in the Diet, and the gradual growth of a strong proletarian representation in the Lower House—which seems bound to come—will fit in to this general scheme of things, remains to be seen. Certain it is that it promises to provide one of the most interesting developments in the history of Japanese representative government.

The growing unpopularity of Independents and minor groups may be regarded as a healthy sign, as the majority of them are, as in France, opportunists and individualists pure and simple. As such, they are ready to sell their support to whichever of the two main parties is prepared to give the better bargain. It is often almost as difficult therefore, to forecast, with any degree of accuracy, the course of political events in Japan as it is to foretell the kaleidoscopic changes that take place in China. A sudden and unexpected shift in the political line-up will sometimes occur almost overnight, and some trivial incident will be

<sup>1</sup> *Minseitō*, 273, with 5,477,650 votes. *Seiyūkai*, 174 with 3,928,294. Proletarians, 5, with 523,888. Independents, 5, with 322,875. Minor Groups, 9, with 183,983.

used to bring about the downfall of a Cabinet that has successfully weathered far more serious storms in the Diet. Party or non-party government, the tenure of its office has, from the outset of parliamentary rule, been subject to these sudden terminations.

Nor is it only from forces within the Diet that these sudden changes are brought about. As often as not, a political change takes place on an issue lying outside the country's Legislature, and quite irrespective of the Government's strength in the Lower House. As a Japanese writer aptly remarked in a recent newspaper article :

“ A parliamentary majority can be no guarantee for the Government's safety, unless our constitutional practice can fundamentally be altered by a wise and healthy use of majority strength, which we have not witnessed in the past. The *Minseito* has never had a majority, but the *Seiyūkai* twice had a clear majority, and it was synonymous with misrule and arbitrariness, and was wrecked by super-party forces.”<sup>1</sup>

The only real difference between domestic politics in Japan to-day and thirty odd years ago is, that formerly the Government of the country was monopolised by bureaucratic clansmen, who would have nothing to do with party politicians. To-day the majority of Cabinet posts are held by Party men.<sup>2</sup> In point of readiness to take full advantage of the powers granted them under the Constitution, however, these party governments have

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Washio in the “ Japan Advertiser ” of 25th December 1929. Since this was written, the *Minseito* has secured an overwhelming majority in the General Election held on February 20th 1930.

<sup>2</sup> The Ministers of War and Marine are always non-party, the former being a general officer, the latter an admiral. A change of government does not, therefore, necessarily mean a change in either of these portfolios. Moreover, if either one or the other of these ministers resigns owing to the Government refusing to carry out the naval or military policy advocated by him, the Government can be placed in a very embarrassing position, as the Service he represents can refuse to appoint a successor.

shown themselves no whit behind their bureaucratic predecessors. In so far as being truly representative of the country's wishes is concerned, the change from bureaucratic to party government is, therefore, more a change of name than of form. This becomes clear when we compare the platforms and policies of the two principal parties in the Lower House. Here are to be found no such clear-cut differences as, for example, those which distinguish the Liberals, Conservatives and Labour Party in England. On paper their platforms may appear to differ, and the " Outs " attack the " Ins " on principle. But when the erstwhile " Outs " contrive to step into power, their general policy has normally but little to distinguish it from that of the Ministry they have ousted. The only real distinguishing feature between the two main parties is that in the *Seiyukai* agricultural and rural interests are predominant. The *Minseito*, on the other hand, depends on the business and urban communities for its main support.<sup>1</sup> While, however, the *Seiyukai* has always commanded a majority in the country districts, where society is more closely organised and where, consequently, there is less individuality of political sentiment, this has not precluded the party from obtaining financial support from certain big business interests. Business and politics, in fact, go hand in hand in Japan, and are closely interlinked. Hence it comes about that the two great rival houses of Mitsui and Mitsubishi, though working in the background, are often found ranged against one another to no small extent in the political field as well as in the field of business. Behind the *Seiyukai* is Mitsui money. The *Minseito* receives strong financial backing from Mitsubishi. It is not unusual, therefore, to find the papers referring to one ministry as a Mitsui Ministry and another as a Mitsubishi Cabinet. It is from this close relationship between busi-

<sup>1</sup> To this it should be added that the *Seiyukai* favour decentralisation and a so-called positive policy, while the *Minseito* prefer centralisation and a rather more negative policy.

ness and politics that many of the evils of present day politics in Japan have sprung.

When big interests like the Mitsubishi and the Mitsui contribute, they may do so partly from a broad and general advantage that may come to them. But lesser interests are not in a position to make disinterested contributions. The fact is that, in order to secure a majority in the Diet and thereby attain to political power, ample funds are essential. The shrewd business man, being well aware of this, is only too willing to supply these "sinews of war," for he knows that people in power can confer a great deal of advantage on their capitalist friends by means of subsidies, protection, purchases, and concessions of various kinds. Contributions to party funds are therefore regarded by many as a form of investment. The need for the Government to have wealthy and generous friends, and its ability to put wealth in the way of those friends so that they can continue their generosity, serve, in fact, to create a vicious circle, which must be broken if Japanese politics are ever to be purified.

The framers of the Constitution probably intended that the Government should always be in the hands of bureaucrats. Certain it is that, for the first few years of the parliamentary system, the bureaucratic rulers of the country did their best to prevent party politicians from obtaining any foothold in the Government. In doing so, they were actuated by the belief, undoubtedly sincere, that the party politician, being of the people, was quite incapable of administering the affairs of the country. A few years' experience of the actual working of the Constitution served, however, to convince the bureaucratic rulers that, no matter how distasteful it might be, an alliance with one or other of the dominant parties in the Lower House was desirable.

Without going into any great detail as to how this came about and how, little by little, the party system developed into the force it is to-day, two incidents may be mentioned

to illustrate the initial insistence of the country's rulers on the principle of Ministerial independence. In 1891 Okuma, who, though a bureaucrat himself, had always shown himself to be a liberal statesman, was dismissed from the Privy Council, simply because he had held a conference with Itagaki, the leader of the Liberal Party. Five years later, circumstances having forced the Government to see the advisability of entering into alliance with one of the much despised parties, and even to offer a Cabinet portfolio to its leader, it was stipulated that Itagaki, the politician thus invited, must sever his connections with his party.

These two instances serve to show how hard the bureaucrats strove to retain all the power in their own hands; their endeavours, however, proved of little avail. Their concession to the influence of the parties, first by the alliance with one of them, and then by admitting a party politician to a seat in the Cabinet, compelled them to abandon the principle of Ministerial independence. The demand for popular representation in the Government itself, as well as in the Legislature, was becoming too insistent, and the year 1898 saw a quasi-party Ministry in power for the first time. The Liberals and the Progressives, though normally opposed to one another, had temporarily amalgamated and, indirectly, forced the Ito Ministry to resign.

Although this did not by any means mark the end of non-party government, it marked a very definite turning-point in the history of constitutional government in Japan. Actually, this first quasi-party government lasted but a short time, for the old rivalry between the two parties, whose amalgamation had served to bring this government into existence, soon reasserted itself once more. A split into their former component parts brought about the fall of the Ministry they had formed, and gave the clansmen and bureaucrats an opportunity to emphasise their old contention that party politicians were incapable of admini-



stration. Nevertheless, even those who held this view realised the advisability of continuing to seek the support of one or other of the parties in the Diet. Accordingly, in 1900, Ito himself, the drafter of the Constitution, actually accepted an invitation to become leader of a reorganised Liberal Party. On its reorganisation, the name of the party was changed to *Seiyukai* (literally, "Political Fraternity Association"), and thus was born, in its present form, the first of the two main parties that now wage war on one another under the guise of a two-party system. Its chief opponent, the *Minseito* (literally "People's Political Party"), came into existence under the name of *Kenseikai* a few years later, when Prince Katsura, another bureaucrat, took the Progressive Party, the former rivals of the old Liberals, under his wing.<sup>1</sup> Numerous splits, fusions, and general reshufflings, have been witnessed in the intervening years and, as noted elsewhere, a number of Independents and minor groups are still to be found amongst the people's representatives in the Lower House. The main struggle for power, however, is now centred around these two main parties, while the lesser groups and Independents watch on, ready to sell their support to the highest bidder.<sup>2</sup> Thus it will be seen that the parties did not arise out of national differences of principle, as in the case of the Whigs and Tories in England, or the Republicans and Democrats in the United States. They were personal coteries, created by leaders who found that, when an elected House had been established, it was necessary to form parties in order to control it and organise its action.

Be that as it may, from the point of view of constitutional progress, the gradual development of a two-party system and party government is a welcome sign, though it is not

<sup>1</sup> The name was changed to *Minseito* in June 1928, when the *Seiyuhonto*, an offshoot of the *Seiyukai* formed in 1924, amalgamated with the *Kenseikai*.

<sup>2</sup> Amongst these smaller groups and Independents there are certain honourable exceptions, men with the true interests of the country at heart. The majority, however, are bare-faced opportunists.

without its dark side. The old Liberals and Progressives may have had their faults, but they were sincere and were ready to fight for their principles. No progress, however, appeared possible without compromise, and their entry into alliances with the bureaucrats, whom previously they had opposed so vigorously, spelt the beginning of the widespread corruption and shady practices that have done so much to bring domestic politics in Japan into disrepute. To some extent, the bureaucratic elements must be held responsible for this, as they did not hesitate to resort to Walpolean methods, in order to gain support from the party politicians. This was a simple enough matter in those early days, when the Government was still independent of the House of Representatives, for a weak House offers little opposition to corruption. A considerable advance has been made since then, but the corrupt practices thereby introduced have continued to a greater or lesser extent even to this day.

Nor is it only corruption and lack of principle that has crept in. Another evil that has tended to develop, is an exaggerated idea of party loyalty.<sup>1</sup> Party interests are thus all too often put above all else, and one can well picture a Japanese Disraeli thundering out, as Disraeli himself did to Bulwer Lytton, "Damn your principles! Stick to your party!"

Admirable as this attitude of "Our party, right or wrong!" may be in some respects, it hardly tends to serve the best interests of the State. This is especially true in the case of Japan, where even the parties themselves have no very hard and fast principles of their own—no cleavage between them on such fundamental questions as Catholic Emancipation, Tariff Reform, Home Rule for Ireland, or any of the other great questions of

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps it would be more correct to speak of personal loyalty than party loyalty. Personalities really play a more important part in Japanese politics than principles, and when one of the numerous leaders in the Lower House leaves his party and joins another, he generally takes a number of personal followers with him.

the day, which have divided the Whigs and the Tories, the Liberals and the Conservatives, in England at different times. A Free Trade Movement, or "Liberty of Trading" as they prefer to call it, has come into existence of late, but it is still on a very small scale and is wholly independent of party politics. Independence for Korea and Formosa has a few supporters, but only very few, and no party, other than some of the smaller proletarian groups, has yet evinced any desire to espouse its cause. As for religious controversy, the Japanese as a nation are far too tolerant (some would say indifferent) towards religions and religious beliefs, ever to bring such matters into the realm of political discussion.

While fundamental questions of principle are mainly conspicuous by their absence, the various extensions of the franchise that have taken place, since popular representation was inaugurated forty years ago, have, of course, tended to raise the standard of political morality which, at the outset, was on about the same level as that of eighteenth century England. Nevertheless, it is perhaps permissible to hope that the proletarian movement, which has received so much attention since the grant of Manhood Suffrage five years ago, may hasten progress towards the attainment of this end. Certain it is that representatives of this movement in the Diet, though still few in number, have made a favourable impression by their dignified deportment in the Lower House, a dignity and seemly behaviour which are all too often lacking among the members of the old-established parties.<sup>1</sup>

Only two general elections have been fought since Manhood Suffrage came into operation and proletarian organisations put forward candidates of their own for the first time. It is yet too early, therefore, to forecast, with any degree of certainty, the future of the movement and its effect on the political situation generally. In the second election, the proletarians fared worse than in the first ;

<sup>1</sup> See p. 82.

but this was mainly due to their fighting each other instead of combining against the candidates of other parties. The number of votes polled by them, a far more reliable index to the progress made, showed a substantial increase. Provided, therefore, that they take the lessons of their defeat to heart, it seems reasonable to expect that, from now on, there will be a fairly steady increase in proletarian representation for some years to come. The existence of right and left elements in a proletarian party is inevitable; but, as the veteran Japanese socialist, Toshihiko Sakai, observed, there is no reason why they should not co-operate in fighting for their common interests. If they do so, Japan may find herself with a three-party system, with the *Seiyukai*, *Minseito*, and proletarians struggling among themselves for power. Alternatively, the two older parties may go out of existence altogether and be replaced by a new one. Neither the *Seiyukai* nor the *Minseito* have any very binding principles, and their party platforms differ but little in fundamental policies. It may quite conceivably happen, therefore, that the more liberal elements of these two parties and of the minor groups and Independents in the Diet, will ultimately join the Proletarian standard, while the *Seiyukai* and *Minseito* themselves break up and form a single new party, composed of all the more conservative and reactionary elements in the Lower House.

While a study of present and past circumstances would appear to indicate the likelihood of the future development of Japanese politics along one or other of the lines suggested, there is, of course, the possibility of the parliamentary system being finally abandoned altogether. At present this does not seem likely, as the only alternative would appear to be a dictatorship. This might be workable for a time, but it would almost inevitably lead eventually to chaos and disorder, a prospect that neither the Japanese people nor their rulers are likely to countenance. Rather than this, they would prefer the continuance of "shadow

government," the system to which they have been accustomed for so many centuries past and which, despite the outward semblance of representative guidance, continues to some extent to this day. In ancient times, this took the form of the Emperor and his ministers being the nominal rulers of the State, while the real governing power was vested in subordinates, who administered the country quietly and efficiently from the background. In Shogunate times, this same form of government still held good, both in respect to the Shogunate itself and to the feudal lords, who nominally administered their own respective domains. The Emperor, the Shogun, and the various *daimyo*, each was a ceremonial head ; but, as a rule, the actual governance of the State or district was carried out by trusted subordinates, generally by active and intelligent *samurai* of inferior rank. In theory, all this was abandoned when representative government was adopted. In practice, it still continues. The real power lies in the hands neither of the Emperor himself nor of the people's representatives. Rather does it lie in those of a small group of high advisers to the Throne, retired statesmen and others, who, though finding no place under the Constitution, are able to make or mar even the Government itself.

The existence of these " powers behind the Throne " is often attacked on the ground that, in these days of constitutional government, it is an anachronism. Perhaps it is ; yet it is undeniable that, with the exception of Great Britain, Switzerland, and one or two minor nations in Europe, the parliamentary system has failed to prove itself the ideal instrument it was thought to be. Some who have tried it have given it up in favour of dictatorship, which is likewise far from ideal. If, therefore, true representative government does not prove workable in Japan, it would seem far more preferable to retain the present practical compromise, between the old established system of high advisers to the Throne and the newly adopted

system of nominal government by the people, than to turn to the only remaining alternative, dictatorship. The Constitution may make no provision for these advisers,<sup>1</sup> but so long as they are selected from amongst men, whose wisdom and ability are beyond question, they can be depended upon to hold the balance between democratic extravagances and tyrannical dictatorship.

If these advisers do, at times, tend towards conservatism, there can be no doubt of their sincerity in working whole-heartedly for the best interests of the country. In this respect they may be likened to that not inconsiderable number of great statesmen and lawyers, included in the ranks of the oligarchic government which prevailed in England for more than half the eighteenth century. These men had their faults ; but, in spite of them, they had a lofty conception of the country's welfare, and guided England with not a little success through a period of difficulty at home and abroad. Nor were they deaf to popular demands ; and in this we have a further parallel with the Japanese advisers behind the Throne to-day. It might almost be said, in fact, that these influential, extra-constitutional figures in the background of the Japanese political system, occupy to-day much the same position that Prince Ito, when drawing up the terms of the Constitution, intended the Cabinet to hold. He saw the necessity of giving the people a sop to their demands, by providing them with a nominal representative form of government ; yet he considered it advisable, and hoped, to retain the real power in the hands of the bureaucrats, until the political education of the people had advanced sufficiently to fit them for their responsibilities. Circumstances, however, soon forced him to make concessions and enter into alliance with the politicians. From this there has gradually evolved the party-government system

<sup>1</sup> For that matter, the Cabinet itself may be said to be extra-constitutional. Ministers of State, under the terms of the Constitution, are individually responsible to the Emperor, and no collective body such as a Cabinet is decreed.



of to-day. But it is still largely superficial and, in actual fact, the period of tutorship continues. The Cabinet itself, being no longer independent of the political parties, is compelled to give at least lip service to the principles of representative government ; but in the background are the bureaucratic statesmen, with the strings still securely in their hands. They realise the wisdom of interfering as little as possible, as public opinion can be ignored no longer ; but they are there, ready whenever considered necessary to put the brake on actions, either of the Diet or of the Government itself, deemed contrary to the interests of the State. It is not lacking in significance, therefore, that after the failure of the *Seiyukai* Government, in 1929, to listen to the voice of the people in the Diet, it was these advisers to the Throne, working in the background, that brought about the downfall of the Tanaka Cabinet. They may be said, therefore, to have read, and heeded, the will of the people far better than those who were in power, nominally as the people's chosen representatives.

No matter under what name it may appear, the long-established system of "shadow government," with high advisers in the background, is likely to continue in some form or another for many a long day to come.<sup>1</sup> As, however, the country becomes more politically minded, so too will the elected government be compelled to give greater heed to the wishes of the electorate. Interference, either with the Government or with the people, by the powerful influences in the background, will show a corresponding diminution. Already, as must be clear from what has been written, considerable progress has been made in this direction, and recent events are likely to hasten it. There is, for instance, the grant of Manhood Suffrage, which at one stroke increased the electorate from

<sup>1</sup>The former practice of calling high advisers *Genro*, or "Elder Statesmen," is likely to die out on the death of Prince Saionji, the last surviving member of the brilliant little group thus named. The actual system of high advisers in the background, however, is likely to continue.

barely 3,000,000 to close on 13,000,000. Many of those who have thus become enfranchised, have still but a hazy conception of the power conferred upon them by the right to vote, and are somewhat indifferent towards politics ;<sup>1</sup> but now that they have that right, it is only a question of time before they learn how to use it. Then again, political jobbery and corruption has developed to such an extent, that a spirit of cynicism pervades the whole country, and the people have come to regard venality as inseparable from politics.<sup>2</sup> This cynicism, however, is turning gradually to disgust, and there is a reasonable hope that, when the newly-enfranchised masses come to realise the power which the vote puts in their hands, they will make full use of it and will insist on cleaner politics. The party or parties that read these signs of the times, and come forward with the sincere intention of rooting out the widespread bribery and corruption that now prevails, will be in the most advantageous position to profit by this revulsion of feeling.

Feudal government, in which the masses had no say whatever ; rule by bureaucratic clansmen, in which the people, despite the removal of class barriers, still had no part ; parliamentary government, in which the bureaucrats in power insisted on ministerial independence ; representative government, in which the Cabinet is definitely of party complexion ; this roughly is the order of evolution that has been witnessed in the political development of Japan in the past sixty years. The last stage is of very

<sup>1</sup> The percentage of those who abstained from voting in the first elections under the Manhood Suffrage Law was low, but this is said to have been due, more to the novelty and to vote-buying, than to political enthusiasm. Many believed that the huge expansion of the electorate, consequent on the grant of Manhood Suffrage, would serve to end the old practice of purchasing votes, as the cost would become prohibitive. Unfortunately, this belief has proved to be unfounded.

<sup>2</sup> " The Premier's desire to raise the moral level of our politics may be realised, because it surely cannot become any lower." This caustic quotation, from a recent issue of the *Osaka Mainichi*, is typical of many such remarks appearing from time to time in the vernacular Press.

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recent origin. The probability is that it has come to stay. How it will finally develop remains to be seen ; but the two most interesting features of its further progress will be the bearing on it of the proletarian movement and the movement for purifying politics.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE JAPANESE PRESS AND ITS INFLUENCE

#### (PART I)

FEW features of Japan's rapid rise to the position of a first-class Power are more striking than the phenomenal growth and development of the vernacular Press. Less than seventy years have passed since the first newspaper was founded in Japan. This, like the next half-dozen that came into existence, was foreign-owned and edited. It was not until the year 1868 that the first vernaculars started to appear, and of those existing at the present day none have histories dating back further than 1872. The progress made in the intervening period of little more than half a century is strikingly demonstrated, therefore, by the fact that in January last year (1929) the *Osaka Mainichi* held a great banquet to celebrate their attainment of a daily circulation of over a million and a half. Admittedly this particular paper leads all others in the matter of sales, but its great rival, the *Osaka Asahi*, claims a circulation of over a million, and several other journals boast of being well past the five-hundred thousand mark, while the total number of dailies registered in Japan is placed at rather over a thousand, of which about one hundred have reasonably large subscription lists.

Circulation in Japan is no more trustworthy as a guide to the influence exerted than it is in England, or in any other country ; but even the greatest detractors of the Japanese Press must recognise the important part played by it, if they take the trouble to study the history of the past fifty or sixty years in Japan.

The faults and follies of the Japanese Press are plain for

all to see, and probably the bulk of foreigners living in Japan, if asked for their opinion, would be inclined to dilate on the inaccuracy and the libellous, even scurrilous, nature of the papers in general. To some extent their censure would be justified; for, as stated succinctly in the appendix to the 1927 reprint of Chamberlain's classic *Things Japanese*, "... cheap scandal still disfigures even the best of Japanese newspapers, which publish news about people without apparently even attempting to verify it, so much so that a British Consul has given his opinion that anything appearing in a Japanese newspaper is no evidence at all as to its having happened."

While, on the surface, this is probably the feature that strikes the foreign observer more forcibly than any other, it would be doing the Japanese Press a grave injustice, if such an expression of opinion were taken to indicate that the vernaculars were intrinsically bad and devoid of any compensating good qualities. The Press in every country has its good and its bad points, and Japan is no exception to this general rule. Even in England we have Hilaire Belloc inveighing against the evils arising from the trustification of the British Press, and an anonymous writer, in a series of articles appearing as recently as November 1928 in *The Economist*, exposed and attacked this same system of newspaper combines with a bitter relentlessness, that lost nothing of its strength and vigour by the cool-headed manner in which the subject was handled.

It may be retorted to this, that the trustification of the British Press, unfortunate though it may be, is not comparable to the libels, inaccuracies, and other similar evils of the newspapers in Japan. Even, however, if such a retort is to be regarded as justified, one has only to call to mind that the Japanese Press has by no means a monopoly in the matter of scurrilous attacks and inaccurate reporting. Both Great Britain and America have their "Yellow Press" even now; and in days gone by, Charles Dickens

took no pains to hide his feelings of revulsion regarding certain sections of the Press of both countries. Even so dignified a news organ as *The Times*, in the 'forties of last century, was not averse to referring to Macaulay as "Mr. Babbletongue Macaulay," and remarking that "...he was hardly fit to fill up one of the vacancies that have occurred by the lamentable death of Her Majesty's two favourite monkeys." <sup>1</sup>

Two blacks do not, of course, make a white. Even if they did, it might well be argued, that ideas regarding decorum have changed considerably since the days of Dickens and Macaulay, and that it is ridiculous, therefore, to attempt a defence of present day evils in Japan on the grounds that they are no worse than those that existed in England eighty years ago. Without, however, trying to condone the practice of making unseemly attacks of a personal nature in the columns of the Japanese, or any other, Press, it is but fair to remember that journalism in Japan is still of comparatively recent growth. Certain of the defects of youth are, therefore, but to be expected and, as one British journalist, speaking from first-hand knowledge of his subject, pointed out when lecturing in London a few years ago :

"It was an unfortunate coincidence that, just at the impressionable age of Japan's young press, our own and America's yellow journalism sprouted so vigorously. In our two hundred and fifty years start we had gained traditions which acted as a corrective, but many of the young journalists of Japan thought that modern sensational journalism, with its contempt of dull accuracy, was the latest and smartest thing." <sup>2</sup>

Whatever its faults and follies may be—and God knows it has both in full measure—the vernacular Press of Japan

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Sherard Vines in his introduction to Kanesada Hana-zono's "Development of Japanese Journalism."

<sup>2</sup> From a paper entitled, "The Press in Japan," read by Mr. Hugh Byas at a meeting of the Japan Society in London on March 26th, 1924.



can never be accused of lacking either in initiative or "push." In organisation, in equipment, in circulation, in general management, it has little to learn, either from England or America. The principal journals are now housed in great eight-storied, reinforced-concrete buildings fully equipped with all the latest machinery and devices for rapid collection and dissemination of news. The two great Osaka papers, the *Asahi* and *Mainichi*, each have aeroplanes and fleets of motor cars and lorries of their own, as well as telephoto apparatus, by which they are able to supplement other more common means—telegraph, telephones, carrier-pigeons and the like—for maintaining constant and rapid communication with their sister papers, the *Tokyo Asahi* and the *Nichi Nichi*, in the Japanese capital. The two leading news agencies, *Rengo*, the ally of *Reuters*, and *Nippon Dempo*, which co-operates with the American *United Press*, are equally well organised and equipped and, during the Enthronement Ceremonies in the autumn of 1928, operated aircraft for the rapid transmission of photographs to the principal towns and cities in Japan, in addition to "covering" news by the normal means. The *Mainichi* and *Nichi Nichi*, as recently as June the same year, each installed three multiple presses in their respective offices, each press being capable of turning out as many as 120,000 copies an hour. Not content with this, the *Mainichi* has, since then, placed an order for eight more presses of the same capacity, an order which, now that it has been executed, gives them a total of eleven such presses and twelve others of lesser capacity.

These are but a few instances taken at random, exemplifying the up-to-date methods employed by the vernacular Press in Japan for the rapid collection and dissemination of news. The way the various units endeavour to compete with one another and increase their own circulation, though not, in some instances, so praiseworthy, are every bit as indicative of enterprise and

initiative. Men of international fame, such as Einstein, Amundsen, and Bertrand Russell, are invited to Japan to lecture under the auspices of one paper or another; famous singers and musicians are likewise invited, and special concerts arranged (some of the leading journals have fine auditoriums of their own); athletic meetings are sponsored, aerial pageants organised, challenge cups and medals presented for anything and everything, from baseball series or a swimming meeting to a flower show, an art display, or a beauty competition. Sometimes a paper, with even greater ambition than its fellows, launches forth on an aerial flight to Europe, as in the case of the *Asahi* in 1925, or fixes up a round-the-world race, as the *Jiji* did three years later. Some papers support hospitals or orphanages, and quite recently the *Osaka Mainichi* branched out as a virtual competitor of Messrs. Thomas Cook, by organising round-the-world tours for its readers! The same journal, two or three years ago, set a subject for an essay, with expenses for a six-months' trip abroad as a prize for the winner, while more than one journal has taken up the popularisation and actual sale of radio sets, athletic equipment and the like.

From the standpoint of pure journalism, this tendency on the part of Japanese newspapers to step outside their proper province is open to criticism. But is it any more reprehensible than the practice of those British journals which seek to increase their circulation by presenting free insurance coupons, or by offering prizes for the best forecast of football results, or for missing-word competitions?

However much one may deplore such excursions from the true realm of journalism, they serve at least two useful purposes. In the first place, by increasing sales and bringing in money they help the papers to cover their running expenses, and thereby retain their financial and general independence. This particular aspect of the Japanese Press will be discussed in greater detail later.

Secondly, it stimulates the interest of the reading public in such matters as aviation, athletics, music, art, or whatever it may be that the papers happen to be "boosting" at the time.

Even admitting the inaccuracy of much that appears in the Japanese Press, and the other faults and follies for which it is to blame, the good it has done, and is still doing, far outweighs the harm. In the early days of its existence, it helped to educate the people politically and to give them a fair working knowledge of other countries besides their own. In more recent years, it has been of inestimable value in popularising western sports and music, art and literature, aviation and science, and innumerable other matters of importance influencing the whole life of the nation.

Up to five or six years ago, interest in athletics was practically confined to the semi-annual professional wrestling competitions and to *ju-jitsu* and fencing. A few football and baseball teams of inferior quality existed, and both these games had a strictly limited following in student circles.<sup>1</sup> Seldom, however, did they receive any mention in the Press, and such a thing as a sports' page was unknown. Much the same was true of western music. The vernacular Press paid no attention to it, and the foreigner in Japan had to be content with the occasional performances of such members of their own community as possessed musical talent. Now, however, as shown in the first chapter of this book, all this has changed; and much of the credit for the change must be accorded to the Japanese Press, which has rightly read the signs of the times and has spared no effort to popularise both athletics and music. As recently as six years ago, Mr. Byas, in the lecture to which allusion has already been made, was able to say, in perfect truth: "There is one striking omission (in the Japanese Press), . . . the great quantity of sports news that our papers regularly print"; yet to-day, the

<sup>1</sup> Vide pp. 4-5.

leading papers in Japan are devoting columns daily to reporting such news in detail, not only of sports in Japan but also of sporting events in America and other countries as well.<sup>1</sup> In addition they are sponsoring football, baseball, and tennis matches, boxing, swimming, and in winter, skiing and skating competitions, and athletic meetings of all kinds, while foreign teams are invited to Japan, and Japanese teams of first-rate quality are sent abroad, under newspaper auspices. The Sports' Editor has now risen to a position of high importance in the Japanese newspaper world, though five or six years ago it was not even considered necessary to have a special man appointed to the post.

To some extent the same is true of music. Some papers are now even maintaining orchestras of their own, and maintain fine, commodious auditoriums for concerts and lectures. Even those with less ambition in this direction run columns for musical news and sponsor concerts. It may well be claimed, in fact, that the increasing interest in good western music, noted in an earlier chapter, has been stimulated to no small degree by newspaper "propaganda" of this kind.<sup>2</sup>

If civil aviation has not shown a greater and more rapid development, it is through no fault of the Press, for nothing has been more praiseworthy than the efforts expended by the leading vernaculars, the *Asahi* in particular, to rouse the people's interest in aerial matters and to contribute to the formation of "air-mindedness" in Japan. When the Great Earthquake of 1923 destroyed all other means of communications, the *Asahi* came to the rescue and operated an aerial mail. Two years later, it organised the first Japanese air flight to Europe. For several years past,

<sup>1</sup> The two leading Japanese news agencies each spent more than Y. 10,000 in cable tolls reporting the progress of the three-days' American baseball "World Series" last year, and the *Osaka Mainichi* covered the news almost as fully through its special correspondent. Heavy expenditure is likewise incurred in covering Davis Cup matches, Olympic Games and the like.

<sup>2</sup> See pp. 8-9 and compare the quotation from Chamberlain given there.

the two *Asahi*'s and their chief rivals, the *Nichi Nichi* and *Osaka Mainichi*, as noted elsewhere, have maintained aircraft of their own, and these four great papers have, time and again, sponsored aerial meetings and competitions, and organised public lectures on aviation under their auspices.

Even one or two of the provincial papers now maintain machines of their own. Activities of this nature may not be actuated purely by altruistic motives, but there is no denying that they exert a most beneficial influence on the country at large.

The influence exercised by the Press in Japan is not, however, confined to the popularisation of sports, of aviation, or of music. From almost the very outset, the papers, as a whole, have been liberal in outlook and have been a powerful factor in educating the people politically. Almost without exception, they have championed the cause of the people consistently, and have advocated successive reforms. The ultimate passage of the Manhood Suffrage Bill in 1925, by which the electorate was increased at one bound from roughly 3,000,000 to close on 13,000,000, was largely the outcome of constant pressure from the vernacular Press, and the anti-military movement which came into prominence on the conclusion of the Great War, and resulted in two large successive cuts in the strength of the Army, owed much to its espousal by the leading journals of the country. The Labour movement and the movement in favour of Women's Rights, as noted elsewhere,<sup>1</sup> likewise owe much to the Press, which is almost unanimous in supporting these two causes. So too does the movement for the abolition of licensed prostitution receive the warm support of the leading journals,<sup>2</sup> while the reactionary element in the country, which would put the clock back and suppress all liberal tendencies in the realm of social and political reform, if it could, receives short shrift from the *Asahi* and very little sympathy from any of the other influential papers.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* p. 125.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* p. 26.

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* p. 119.

In adopting this liberal attitude, the Japanese Press is almost invariably up in arms against the Government of the day, and it is a striking fact that the more a paper attacks the Government the greater does its circulation tend to increase. Conversely, as amply demonstrated in the case of the *Hochi*, which supported the late Marquis Okuma when he was in power, circulation drops rapidly whenever a paper seeks too consistently to defend the Government policies. The political independence of the Japanese Press is, in fact, one of its outstanding features, and party organs, as known in England, are non-existent. True, the *Hochi* is sometimes called the organ of the *Minseitō*, and the *Chuō*, a small paper of little importance, is sometimes called the *Seiyukai* organ ; but the former, after its experience in espousing the cause of the Okuma Cabinet twelve or fifteen years ago, has learned its lesson, and its open support of the *Minseitō* and of its predecessor, the *Kenseikai*, is now mainly relegated to times when that party is out of power.<sup>1</sup>

In the early days of the Japanese Press, things were different. At the start, in fact, the papers were almost slavishly subservient to the Government of the day and, referring to it in the most deferential terms, never attempted to subject its actions to criticism. This state of affairs, however, lasted but a few years and, with the return of the first batches of young men from abroad, whither they had been sent for study after the opening of the country to foreign intercourse, new ideas began to take root, and youthful reformers used the columns of the Press to give vent to their dissatisfaction with the slow progress made by the country's administrators. Press attacks on the Government became the order of the day and, fearful of the harm that these over-enthusiastic radicals, full of abstract ideas of civil rights and freedom,

<sup>1</sup> The various proletarian parties and groups have papers of their own, which might perhaps be termed party organs ; but they are not dailies, and their circulation is strictly limited.



might do by their scathing denunciations, the Government, which hitherto had shown great leniency towards the Press, clapped on drastic laws for its control.<sup>1</sup>

This action was justified to some extent, though it went too far and, curiously enough, it only served to stimulate the interest of the general public in the newspapers and gave a fillip to circulation. Persecution therefore strengthened the growth and importance of the Press, and although, at one time, the arrest and imprisonment of editors and their assistants was an almost daily occurrence, fresh men were always forthcoming to take their place and carry on their attacks against the Government, until they, in their turn, found themselves behind the prison bars, whereupon others took up the fight where their predecessors perforce had left it off.

One reason for this stubborn resistance to authority was that many *samurai*, finding themselves deprived of their old calling on account of the abolition of feudalism, and smarting under the action of the Government in depriving them of such ancient privileges as the right to carry two swords, found a heaven-sent outlet for their activities in the Press. In this new walk of life, they showed the same irrepressible boldness as they had formerly been wont to do in action.<sup>2</sup>

The former drastic control of the Press has now been relaxed to a large extent, but the anti-Government attitude of the vernacular papers is still one of the outstanding features of Japanese journals as a whole. It is, in fact, one of the boasts of Japanese newspapermen, that journalism is one of the few industries that have prospered in Japan without Government protection and encouragement.

Actually, however, this boast requires some modification. It may be justified in so far as the past forty or fifty years are concerned, but it overlooks the fact that,

<sup>1</sup> See p. 161.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Young Japan," Vol. II. pp. 447-9, by J. R. Black.

during the first few years of its existence, the Press was, to some extent, under official auspices. As such, it was able to exercise\* considerable influence from the very outset. Inspired writers were utilised by the Government, established after the Restoration of the Emperor in 1868, to pave the way for the programme of modernisation and reform that they had in mind. It was, for example, through this channel that the people were taught to appreciate the necessity of an Imperial army and uniformity in land tenure, taxation, currency, education and penal laws— aspirations all destined to be fulfilled in the near future.<sup>1</sup>

It is to the credit of the Government of those days, that they were quick to recognise the value of the Press as an organ for educating the people in the matter of national requirements, and although the subsequent repression was unnecessarily severe, and tended to some extent to hamper the proper development of the Press, there is no denying that the necessity for a certain measure of control existed. Just as in the case of China at the present time, the sudden emergence from eastern mediaevalism to modern westernisation tended to make the people lose their mental balance and confound liberty with license. The danger of an irresponsible native Press at such a time was, therefore, a matter for serious attention, and the Government, though it may have gone too far, can hardly be blamed for taking what it considered to be reasonable precautions to check the evil consequences apprehended.

Most of the old time restrictions, however, are now things of the past, and although some still remain, the freedom accorded in most directions is a most marked feature. In so far as libel is concerned, it would, in fact, be all to the good if stricter control were still exercised; for, if the former Press laws were unnecessarily repressive, the present Law is far too lenient. A law of libel does, in

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "The Making of Modern Japan," by J. H. Gubbins, C.M.G., p. 90, Seely, Service and Co. London 1922.

fact, exist, but seldom is it put into force. The most scurrilous and libellous attacks on the honour and good names of prominent personalities, and of humbler individuals alike, are made in the columns of the daily Press ; but nothing is done to stop them. They are passed by without protest of any kind from the wretched victims, who apparently go on the principle that a denial merely serves to bring conviction. The strange thing is how little these unchallenged attacks seem to impair the prestige of those against whom they are directed. Possibly, therefore, there is some justification for ignoring them. Nevertheless, the fact that such libellous attacks are made on men in the highest quarters, from the Premier downwards, and yet receive so little attention, either from the general public or from the persons slandered, is apt to mislead the casual observer into concluding that the influence of the Japanese Press is negligible, a conclusion that is far from correct.

Considering the extraordinary freedom given in this matter of slanderous attacks at the present time, the change since 1875, when the first oppressive restrictions were imposed on the Japanese Press, is most marked. By the law promulgated in that year, anyone who slandered or sharply criticised a Government official was liable either to imprisonment or a fine, though only the editor was held responsible for articles appearing in his paper infringing this law. Eight years later, the law was revised, so as to include the proprietor and manager as well as the editor. All were made jointly responsible ; and so strictly was the law interpreted, that even jokes, wit, satire and sarcasm, directed against a government official, were treated as libel. Suppressions and suspensions of papers, and arrests and imprisonment of the leading members of newspaper staffs, became daily occurrences. A new and more lenient law was passed in 1887, and further restrictions were removed ten years later ; but it was not until 1909 that it became enacted, that no editor or

publisher could be fined or otherwise punished, except by the decision of a court of law.

As matters stand at the present time, the Press, despite the all too frequent imposition of temporary news embargoes, is free to speak its mind as freely and slanderously as it likes about the Government, about Government officials, and about persons and things in general, provided it steers clear of anything bordering on *lèse majesté*, or of spreading subversive social doctrines. On these two points the law is unyielding in its strictness. Any infringement results in immediate suspension of the offending paper and the confiscation of the money which every publication dealing with political and kindred matters is forced to deposit with the Government as guarantee of good faith.

With so much freedom and latitude accorded them, it is seldom nowadays that a paper lays itself open to the action of the law ; but a reminder of the times when the arrest of editors and their assistants was of frequent occurrence is seen in the so-called " prison editor," who, even to this day, is found in the employ of most, if not all, the leading papers. This functionary was originally introduced as a sort of " whipping boy " and, for a slight consideration, was prepared to represent himself as the real editor and go to prison, pay fines, or take whatever other punishment might be forthcoming, whenever the paper employing him infringed the Law. Thanks to him the general working and management of the paper could thus be saved from the upset which would inevitably occur if the real editor had been made to undergo a term of imprisonment. A practicable and knowledgeable people, the Japanese journalistic fraternity !

## CHAPTER XII

### THE JAPANESE PRESS AND ITS INFLUENCE

#### (PART II)

ENOUGH has been said in the previous chapter to show that the Japanese Press is thoroughly independent in its attitude towards the government authorities and political parties alike. What then, it may be asked, are the directing forces behind the various units of the Press? Are there, as in England, any great groups or combines? Are there any Beaverbrooks, or Berry Brothers, Rothermeres or Inveresks? To the last two questions a negative answer must be given, unless we except the two rival groups, the *Tokyo Asahi* with its sister paper the *Osaka Asahi*, and the *Tokyo Nichi Nichi* with its sister paper the *Osaka Mainichi*, which, incidentally, also publishes an English edition.<sup>1</sup> With these two exceptions, none of the Japanese papers are connected in any way with each other.<sup>2</sup>

While, however, the phenomenon found in England or America, of a single group or combine controlling a number of papers all over the country, is entirely lacking in Japan, a somewhat similar effect is obtained by the

<sup>1</sup> There are, of course, certain foreign-owned papers, the two principal being, the "Japan Advertiser" (American) of Tokyo and "Japan Chronicle" (British) of Kobe. The "Japan Times" of Tokyo, though published in English, is Japanese-owned and edited.

<sup>2</sup> This statement refers to the daily Press and requires modification if magazines and periodicals are included. The publishing company *Kodansha*, with Chiji Noma as President, boasts of nine monthly publications with an aggregate of no less than 6,000,000 readers. They thus control more than 80% of the magazine circulation in Japan. Some of the daily papers publish illustrated and other periodicals as a side line.

fact that the leading journals of Tokyo and Osaka have special local editions, which compete with the provincial papers in all the principal towns and cities. Chiba, Shizuoka, Nagoya, Fukuoka and other big centres of population, each have their own editions of the *Asahi*, the *Jiji*, the *Nichi Nichi* or the *Mainichi*, and great is the competition between them and the provincial papers, whose territory they thus invade. In general make up, these local editions are exactly the same as their parent papers in Tokyo and Osaka, and contain the same foreign and general domestic news. The only difference is that one page is devoted to news of local interest.

At one time, all the leading papers of Tokyo and Osaka endeavoured to extend their influence in this way; but the cost involved by maintaining local offices and staffs, and general news facilities, proved to be too great for all but the most wealthy. With a few exceptions, therefore, the tendency is now to give up this useless throat-cutting competition and to specialise on some particular line of news, instead of trying to cover everything. Thus, while the *Tokyo Asahi* and *Nichi Nichi* continue to strive with one another for first place as national papers, taking everything in their stride and sparing neither trouble nor expense, the *Jiji* concentrates on news and advertisements dealing with industrial matters, while the *Chugai Shogyo* specialises in commercial news.<sup>1</sup> The *Kokumin*, which is nationalistic and patriotic in outlook, caters largely for the military world of Japan, the *Yorozu* for students, the *Yomiuri* for the fair sex, and the *Miyako*, strange though the mixture may sound, for *geisha*, actors and persons interested in economics and finance. Unless we include the pro-*Seiyukai Chuo*, a small daily of minor importance, the only paper specialising in party politics is the *Hochi*,

<sup>1</sup> The *Chugai Shogyo* is said to have Mitsui money behind it, while the *Kokumin* is connected with the Nezu and Wakao interests. The *Jiji* and other leading papers are likewise reputed to have financial connections with different "Big Business" interests.



which, as noted elsewhere, was formerly the organ of the late Marquis Okuma and his party, the now defunct *Kenseikai*.

All these, and all the leading provincial papers with one exception, are owned by joint stock companies, and occasionally, as witnessed but recently in the case of the *Kokumin*,<sup>1</sup> a conflict of opinion arises between the principal shareholders and the editors. The one exception is the *Kahoku Shimpō*, published in Sendai, with a circulation of about 50,000, which is privately owned, the owners being a family named Shoriki.

Though this paper exercises considerable influence in the territory served by it, its circulation is small in comparison with some of the other provincial papers. The two great rivals in Nagoya, the *Shin Aichi* and the *Nagoya Shimbun*, claim circulations of 150,000 each, despite their competition with each other and with the *Osaka Asahi* and *Mainichi*, which are always striving to extend their influence in the Nagoya area. The *Fukuoka Nichi Nichi*,<sup>2</sup> the leading paper in Kyushu, and the *Hokkai Times*, the principal journal in Hokkaido, likewise boast of circulations of 150,000 each, while the *Otaru Shimbun*, the main rival of the last named, is in the neighbourhood of 100,000. Several other provincial papers have circulations of 50,000 or more.

Financially, the big provincial papers are far better off than the majority of their contemporaries in Tokyo or Osaka. Except for the two *Asahis*, the *Nichi Nichi* and the *Mainichi*, none of the dailies published in these two main centres are able to show profit; yet several of the

<sup>1</sup> In January 1929 the veteran journalist, Soho Tokutomi, resigned from the *Kokumin*, owing to difference of opinion with the new owners, who wished to turn it into a money-making organ and cared little for the interests of pure journalism. It was a sad blow to Tokutomi, who had founded the paper and made it what it was by forty years' devoted service to it.

<sup>2</sup> Not to be confused with the *Tokyo Nichi Nichi*, with which it has no connection.

leading provincial papers are good money-making concerns. The explanation appears to be that the provincial papers have fewer competitors in the areas they serve. They do not, therefore, have to resort to the same costly methods of attracting readers as do the big journals of Tokyo and Osaka. Then, too, their production costs are less and, as they do not attempt to extend their influence into other areas or seek for exclusive news, they are saved the expense of maintaining offices and plant, office staffs and the like, in other parts of the country, nor do they employ special correspondents abroad. They have their own reporters for local news, but for news from abroad, and from other parts of Japan, they depend on the services of such news agencies as *Rengo* and *Nippon Dempo*, with whom they have long-distance "fixed-calls" at regular intervals throughout the day. These two agencies, between them, now provide the bulk of the domestic news supplied by news agencies and, in so far as *Rengo* is concerned, the organisation for collecting and distributing news of this kind is said to account for the greater part of its earnings. *Rengo*, in fact, claims to serve 85 per cent. of the total daily newspaper circulation of 6,500,000 in the Japanese Empire, and roughly four-fifths of the news it distributes is domestic.

In order to collect and distribute this domestic news, offices have been set up in every important centre, and all these offices are kept in communication with headquarters in Tokyo by means of fixed calls on the telephone throughout the day. Hokkaido, Kyushu, and Shikoku, as well as all parts of the main island, are served in this way, while Korea and Formosa are served by telegraphic communication at regular intervals daily. Exclusive telephone lines have been set up between the *Rengo* head office and the principal news sources, such as the Cabinet Office and other Governmental Departments, the Metropolitan Police Bureau, Bank of Japan, Stock Exchange, etc., and also between the *Rengo* office and those of all the

member papers in the Metropolis. In the headquarter office there is also a special telephone apparatus, whereby news is transmitted to all the member papers simultaneously. An army of reporters, over seventy in number, is distributed throughout the main news centres in Toyko, and a corps of editors is kept on duty day and night. Nothing, in fact, is left undone to secure the quickest collection and distribution from the news sources to the newspaper offices.

*Nippon Dempo* has a similar, though smaller, organisation ; but except for these two rival concerns, no other domestic news agencies of any importance exist. There are, of course, a number of minor concerns ; but they deal almost exclusively with advertising work. Such news as they distribute is sent by mail or by hand, and is mainly of a propagandist or advertising nature. Some of these minor concerns are, in fact, little better than blackmailing agencies, and print libellous sheets of their own. Being, in many instances, connected with bureaux of commercial information, they are able to carry out attacks of such a nature as to injure the business of those against whom these attacks are delivered. The wretched victim can generally get no satisfaction by going to law, and his only way to stop them is to advertise. Many firms are said to pay a regular blackmail, running into considerable sums, in order to escape the libellous attention of these sheets. To return, however, to *Rengo* and *Nippon Dempo*.

These two agencies, besides operating widespread domestic news services, are, as already noted, closely connected with *Reuters* and its allied agencies throughout the world, and with the *United Press* respectively. While, therefore, some of the Tokyo and Osaka papers maintain special correspondents of their own in the principal capitals and cities abroad, the bulk of the foreign news entering Japan is received and distributed by the two great rival news agencies, *Rengo* and *Nippon Dempo*. This, however, is a feature of comparatively recent origin ; for,

prior to the World War, news agency work of this kind was entirely under foreign control. From the Japanese viewpoint, this was, very naturally, found unsatisfactory, as it was felt that, not only were foreigners less fitted than themselves to judge of their requirements in the matter of news, but that, where the reporting of international politics and the like was concerned, the incoming news might be coloured to some extent by the national views of the countries of origin. The obvious remedy was to organise news agencies of their own, to work in co-operation with the leading news agencies abroad, and to handle the incoming news themselves. The *Kokusai Tsushinsha* (International News Company) was formed in 1914 accordingly, and entered into contract with *Reuters* and its allied agencies. Later, the *Nippon Dempo* made a somewhat similar agreement with the *United Press*, while the *Toho* was formed under official auspices to carry out a news service to and from China, and other news-collecting organisations likewise came into existence. Subsequently in 1926, *Kokusai* and *Toho* combined, in so far as incoming news was concerned, and, in conjunction with the eight leading papers of Tokyo and Osaka, formed themselves into an organisation, modelled on the *Associated Press* of America, under the name of *Nippon Shimbun Rengosha*, compendiously known as *Rengo*.

For a time, the *Teikoku Tsushinsha*, an agency which had been handling the incoming services of *Nauen* and of the *International News Service*, and was subsidised by the *Kenseikai* (one of the two principal political parties in Japan), tried to compete, but it has now been eliminated and, with the amalgamation of *Kokusai* and *Toho*, the field is now held by *Rengo* and *Nippon Dempo*.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Rengo* is strictly non-partisan. *Nippon Dempo* has close financial connections with the *Seiyukai*, the present main Opposition party. The year 1929 saw the final elimination of *Toho*. Internal discord between the *Kokusai* and *Toho* elements in *Rengo*, on the question of policy, led, in that year, to all *Toho* interests being bought out by *Rengo*, including those connected with the outgoing service to China.

By means of these two agencies, and of the special correspondents maintained abroad by the leading papers, Japan is kept well supplied with foreign news. Only about 30-40 per cent. of the press cables brought into the country in this way are actually published ; but they are all read and studied by the newspaper editors and others concerned, and account to a large extent for the generally well-informed nature of the editorials, and other articles on foreign affairs, appearing in the principal journals of Tokyo and Osaka. Particularly well-informed are they on Chinese affairs, and cables from China generally occupy about two columns daily, in each of the leading papers, as against an average of only about one allotted to all other foreign telegraphic news. At times, when domestic news is plentiful, the space given to foreign news items, including Chinese, is even more restricted.

The amount of time and energy devoted to the collection of this domestic news, is a feature of Japanese journalism that merits more than passing notice ; for, besides the uniqueness (and surely it is unique ?) of some of the methods employed in its collection, it has a very definite bearing on the quality of the Japanese Press as a whole, and also on the running costs.

Besides subscribing to the services provided by the news agencies, the leading journals employ immense numbers of reporters of their own. Normally these men spend their time in and around the different government offices, the big business firms, police headquarters, the law courts and other similar potential news centres. When, however, some event of special importance occurs, or is expected, special attention is directed towards collecting the most minute, and seemingly inconsequential, information regarding it, and reporters are sent out, literally in their hundreds, to cover it. Thus, at the time of the Enthronement Ceremonies in the autumn of 1928, the *Mainichi* alone is said to have detailed no less than 200 men to cover the news in Kyoto, and all the leading papers opened



special offices, and maintained huge staffs, at the old Capital, throughout the month or more that these ceremonies, and the preliminary activities attendant thereon, were being performed.

How, it may be asked, could such large numbers of reporters be employed? The answer is, that almost every member of the Imperial Family, every statesman, every leading politician, and every important official, had one or more reporters detailed by the principal papers to watch his every move and to report in detail on everything he did and everything he said. The amount of information thus accumulated must have been prodigious, and the bulk of it, being largely inconsequential, probably never found its way into print. But it is typical of the Japanese as a nation, that such great pains are exerted to collect even the most minute details, as their thirst for knowledge is well-nigh unquenchable. Out of all this vast amount of petty detail, the papers would be able to pick an occasional gem of real news-value or, by putting two and two together, draw conclusions of their own, which might, or might not, be correct, but which would, in any case, be duly published in their columns.

Much the same happened at the time of the late Emperor's illness and subsequent death, and again at the time of his funeral. Huge numbers of reporters were employed day and night, covering every item of news, even remotely connected therewith. Similarly, on such occasions as the annual Grand Manoeuvres, vast numbers of reporters are employed, although, in so far as Army Manoeuvres are concerned, a curious feature of this Press work is, that the main attention is directed towards covering the movements of the Emperor and other high personages attending them. The actual military operations and their conduct receive but scant attention. The post of Military Correspondent is unknown in Japan, and the reporters, who are sent off to the Grand Manoeuvres, have generally but little interest in the operations *per se*.



While, however, the papers do not employ special military correspondents, most of the leading papers have reporters specially detailed to cover news emanating from the War Office and General Staff, just in the same way as they have them covering news from all the other Government offices ; and in most of these centres of officialdom there are special Press clubs, formed by those assigned to the task of " covering " news from these sources. The Government, for its part, having come to recognise the important part played by the Press, accords them privileges which formerly would have been regarded as almost unthinkable. Frequent Press interviews are given by the Premier, and by other leading statesmen and politicians, on the outstanding questions of the day ; the official spokesmen of the Foreign Office and other government departments receive gatherings of Press representatives every day, and answer their questions, or give out such items of information as may be deemed desirable ; and special arrangements are made for newspapermen to attend official functions and ceremonies of every kind. From time to time, it is true, instructions are issued for the Press to withhold mention of certain items of news ; but, taken on the whole, the papers have a remarkable amount of freedom allowed them, and are given every opportunity to acquire information, other than that of a secret or confidential nature. The pity is that, with so much opportunity to get at the real facts, individual papers, in their anxiety to go one better than their contemporaries, frequently print as gospel truth what is no more than conjecture on their part. These guesses are sometimes reasonably near the truth ; but they are even more often devoid of foundation, and give rise to such expressions of distrust in the reliability of the Japanese Press as that voiced by the British Consul, to whom reference was made in the last chapter.

This unreliability of so much that figures in Japanese papers as news, is one of the features requiring rectifying,

and is due to several causes. Amongst these are the tendency to depend more on the quantity than on the quality of the reporters, and the practice of publishing too many editions. As noted elsewhere, the leading papers of Tokyo and Osaka employ immense staffs of reporters. It is obviously impossible, therefore, to pay them more than a meagre salary. The result is, that those who are of real ability are apt to seek more remunerative work elsewhere, as soon as an opportunity presents itself. In like manner, as each paper publishes some eight to ten editions a day, there is little time to check up reports, and it is almost impossible to supply fine and well-considered copy.

Another weakness is the tendency to follow out some of the worst features of the Northcliffe Press. The author of *Mirrors of Downing Street*, in his chapter on the late Lord Northcliffe, quotes "Scrutator," as writing in "Truth," that "... he excelled in judging the taste of the crowd, in the art of dressing the window, and in the copiousness with which he fed the public appetite for something new every day." Much the same is true of the Japanese Press as a whole, although, as in the case of Lord Northcliffe, it may be said in its defence that, in the final analysis, it is the crowd, rather than the papers, that are to blame, as it is their taste that is poor, and the papers have to cater to it if they are to keep up, or increase, their circulation.

At the same time, it is to the credit, both of the papers and of the crowd, to whose likings they cater, that the former are generally liberal in outlook and are advocates of social and political reform. Cynics may reply to this that their attitude in this respect does not indicate any altruism on their part, but is merely a proof of their being opportunists; they adopt this stand because they know it appeals to the crowd and attracts readers, just in the same way as they "feed the public appetite for something new every day." This contention may perhaps be justified to some extent, and is not unlike the accusations

that used to be made against Gladstone by his political opponents ; yet, as one of his biographers has aptly put it, “. . . Gladstone's strength lay in his ability to gauge public opinion and, with this as his guide, to champion the people's cause.”<sup>1</sup> In other words, he was an opportunist in the best sense of the word ; and what good statesman is not ? It is therefore to their credit, rather than to their discredit, that the Japanese papers, as a whole, appear to be possessed of this same faculty of gauging public opinion, however dormant it may sometimes appear to be, and of thereupon taking the lead in giving active expression to the people's cause.

Summing up then, it may be said that the Japanese Press indulges too freely in libellous attacks and inaccuracies, and suffers from too many young underpaid reporters and from too many editions. Occasionally it exhibits an anti-foreign bias and, to the disadvantage of pure journalism, is inclined to step outside its proper province. On the other hand, it is thoroughly up-to-date on the technical side, and shows both courage and initiative, while, as a liberal educator and leader of the people's cause, it is an important factor in the social life and welfare of the people. Thanks to the Press, the political education of the people has been greatly assisted, and an interest in art, music, literature, aviation, athletics, and other beneficial subjects stimulated, while the old archaic written language of the country has been so simplified in style and construction by the vernacular papers, that a knowledge of foreign and domestic affairs has been imparted, through the medium of the written word, to all, from the highest to the lowest in the land. Taking all these, and other considerations, into account, some measure of the immense influence of the Press in Japan may be obtained. To its credit, be it said, the balance of that influence has been to the good of the country.

<sup>1</sup> “ W. E. Gladstone,” by Osbert Burdett. Published by Messrs. Constable and Co. London 1927.

## CHAPTER XIII

### RELIGIOUS FORCES AND THEIR POLITICAL BEARING

#### (PART I)

So lightly does religion appear to ride on the shoulders of the Japanese as a nation, that it is often contended that they are a non-religious people. Much, of course, depends on the individual viewpoint as to what constitutes a religious people. On this, even theologians fail to agree. Church-going, or its equivalent, is certainly no criterion. If it were, the Japanese might well be regarded as religiously inclined, as visits to shrines and temples, with a short silent prayer before the high altar, or what takes the place thereof, form a feature of Japanese life that is bound to leave an impression on the foreign visitor, who witnesses it for the first time. On the other hand, whether religious or non-religious, the Japanese can hardly be termed a godless people in the strict sense of the word, for godlessness postulates the absence of gods, whereas *Shinto*, the national religion—or as some prefer to call it, the national cult of Japan—boasts of a pantheon of eighty myriads of divine beings.

While, however, *Shinto* shrines and Buddhist temples abound everywhere, and practically every Japanese household has its *Butsudan* (Household Shrine) or *Kamidana* (God Shelf), it is the formal, rather than the spiritual, side of religion that is mainly in evidence.

Even Japanese who are opposed to Christianity in other respects, are ready to admit that, by its challenge to the intellect, it has set the youth of the nation to think, and has succeeded to a large extent in rousing the people out

of their religious apathy. Buddhism, which was rapidly becoming moribund, has been stirred into something like activity by the introduction of Christian teaching and ethics, and Buddhists and Shintoists alike have been brought face to face with the fact that, even though Christianity in its present form may not appeal to the religious taste of the country at large, it has had the effect of making the people realise that there is something lacking in the old native religions, and that they must bestir themselves if they are to retain them in their folds.

Critics of Christian missionary work in Japan—and they are many—are apt to censure the missionaries for this very reason. “If,” they say, “the Japanese are content with their own gods and their own religions, why try to disillusion them and thereby make them dissatisfied? Why try to foist another religion upon them?”

A superficial observer might agree with this view of the question, especially if he recalls the harm done by well-meaning liberals in other directions, by advocating “divine discontent.” Apart, however, from other considerations, it is well to bear in mind that other factors, besides Christian teaching, are at work in Japan, making the people dissatisfied with their old gods and their old religious beliefs, and making them break away from both. Buddhism and *Shinto* may have been well suited to the feudal and agricultural society that existed in Japan up to the middle of last century; but they are quite unfitted to the modern industrial system of the country, while the family system, with its emphasis on ancestor worship, the very backbone of the national polity for the past twelve hundred years, is being rapidly broken up under the stress of the economic forces of industrialism. The spread of industrialism, in fact, without any assistance from Christian teachings and ethics, is causing the old gods to be forsaken. Unlike Christianity, however, it has nothing of a spiritually satisfying nature to offer in exchange. The result is that people, yearning inwardly for something

to replace what they have given up, turn eagerly to the prophets of material blessings, to Kropotkin and Marx, as their fathers did to Herbert Spencer, or John Stuart Mill, in the belief that they can supply the mental and spiritual food which they crave. It is likewise due to this same search for something to replace the old gods, in whom the people are losing faith, that the Neo-Shinto cults, like *Omoto*kyo and *Tenri*kyo, both of which have fallen foul of the authorities in the past few years, have sprung into existence and spread so rapidly in popularity.<sup>1</sup>

There are many thinking Japanese who regard this tendency, to set up and follow what they call "false and fantastic faiths," as an even greater danger to the State than the "dangerous thoughts," against which the authorities inveigh so loudly. The fact that such faiths attract so many followers is taken as a sure indication that the people are anxious for religious guidance, and that the authorities have erred in regarding religion as a negligible factor in their education.

So little importance has been attached to religious teaching that it is entirely absent from the school curriculum, and even Christian missionary schools and colleges are forbidden to impart any on the premises, if they desire full government recognition.

The wisdom of this attitude towards religion is questioned by many thinking Japanese. Some even claim that the corruption in politics and civic administration, and the low standard of business morality among certain sections of the Japanese business world, are in no small part attributable to this failure to impart religious instruction to the youth of the nation. Only as recently as February 23rd this year, Dr. Inazo Nitobé, the well-known publicist, put forward this hypothesis in the course

<sup>1</sup> Stern measures, including long-term sentences for many of the leaders, were adopted against the *Omoto*kyo sect in 1920 and against a branch sect of the *Tenri*kyo in the summer of 1928. In each instance, their teachings were considered to be contrary to the interests of the country and to constitute *lèse majesté*.



of a newspaper article, in which he contrasted the strange lack of civic loyalty to the strong sense of loyalty to the Throne.

“There are two forces in England,” he wrote in the *Osaka Mainichi* of that date, “that work in moulding the character of her people—the State and the Church, Government and Religion. . . . In a country like ours where there is no institution equivalent to a church, or a strong religious teaching, where indeed there is scarcely any moral authority, politics is doomed to corruption, unless some organ of counteracting influence is set at work.”

The authorities insist on ethical instruction in the schools and colleges ; but it is ethics entirely divorced from religion. For this purpose there has been developed what is known as State *Shinto*. This, the authorities assert, is an ethical code or cult and not a religion, and must not be confounded with religious or, as it is more often called, Shrine *Shinto*. When, therefore, one sees it stated in official statistics on religion in Japan, that there are 48,000,000 Buddhists, 16,000,000 Shintoists, and only a little more than 200,000 Christians in the country, a somewhat false impression is obtained, as the figure 16,000,000 shown for Shintoists, refers to the total number of followers of the thirteen sects, into which the purely religious form of *Shinto* is divided. State Shintoists, on the other hand, include the whole nation, Buddhists, Shintoists and even Christians inclusive ; for State Shinto is, according to the official interpretation, nothing more nor less than a code of ethics, aimed at inculcating loyalty to the Emperor and patriotism. It is taught at all schools and colleges, and entails the performance of certain rites, of an allegedly secular nature, at stipulated times and places.

Whether or no these rites and these teachings are really so entirely divorced from religion as asserted, is a question frequently discussed by students and scholars, both Japanese and foreign, and many diverse opinions are held

regarding the matter. Professor Chamberlain, by the very name given to his brilliant exposition of State *Shinto*,<sup>1</sup> shows that he is in no two minds about its religious character. Dr. Genchi Kato, probably the greatest living authority on *Shinto* in all its various aspects, after mentioning that " . . . there are thirteen *Shinto* sects now living and officially recognised as religions in Japan, on the same footing as Buddhism and Christianity," goes on to say :—

" So far as State *Shinto* is concerned, it may be taken as a kind of national ceremony and teaching of Japanese morality, and to that extent it might be called secular and non-religious ; but, as investigation proceeds, the truth will appear that even this State *Shinto*, which some Japanese go so far as to speak of as no religion at all, is in reality nothing short of evidence of a religion interwoven in the very texture of the original beliefs and national organisation of the people, camouflaged though it may be as a mere code of national ethics and State rituals, and as such apparently entitled only to secular respect." <sup>2</sup>

While, however, Chamberlain, Kato, and many other scholars, insist that both State *Shinto* and Shrine *Shinto* must be regarded as religions, the official view is that State *Shinto* is not a religion. In this they have the backing of those who contend that, neither in the rites performed nor in the prayers offered is there any indication of a religious motive. The rites, they maintain, are no more than acts of deference and respect to the spirits of the departed, while the prayers are worded impersonally, as implied hopes rather than as definite supplications to a personal deity.

Call it what you will, a religion or merely a code of

<sup>1</sup> " The Invention of a New Religion," by Prof. Basil Hall Chamberlain. Published in London 1912 by the Rationalist Press Association.

<sup>2</sup> " A Study of Shinto, the Religion of the Japanese Nation," by Dr. Genchi Kato. D.Litt. p. 2. Published in Tokyo 1926 by the Meiji Japan Society.

ethics, the fact remains that, as it is taught at every school and college, and as its rites are performed at every State ceremony, the influence it exerts on the nation at large, from the highest to the lowest in the land, is immense. No true understanding of Japan and the Japanese is possible unless and until that influence is fully appreciated.

Unlike purely Shrine *Shinto*, State *Shinto* is a product of comparatively recent times, its origin being found no further back than the late 'sixties of last century. It may, of course, be regarded as an offshoot of the old religious *Shinto* which, though not mentioned by name until about the year A.D. 552,<sup>1</sup> has its roots in the remote past when, according to Japanese beliefs, the gods were in their hey-day. State *Shinto* is, in fact, the outcome of a highly successful attempt, on the part of the statesmen of the Restoration period, to unite the people, in order to show a strong and solid front against all possible foreign aggressors, a unity which did not exist until after the enforced opening of the country to foreign intercourse in the middle of last century. Prior to that time Japanese patriotism, in the sense that we know it to-day, was practically unknown. Loyalty and Duty were highly esteemed; but these virtues, with but comparatively few exceptions, were accorded to the feudal lords by their retainers and not to the country or the Throne. The Emperor himself received little more than lip-service, and sometimes not even that. It was the genius of the early Meiji statesmen that they realised that, in order to make

<sup>1</sup> Dr. D. C. Holtom in his "Political Philosophy of Modern Shinto" (Vol. XLIX, Part II of the Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan), after noting that there is no documentary evidence in Japanese records to show that the term *Shinto* was in use in Japan prior to the introduction of Buddhism in that year, goes on to say—"The evidence, as far as it goes, indicates that the word came into general use as a result of the heightening of national consciousness during the early period of the struggle between Buddhism, as a foreign faith, and the native religion of old Japan. . . . In its early periods the indigenous cult of Japan appears to have been nameless."

the country strong and united, the narrow provincial loyalty and patriotism of the past must be remoulded and concentrated on one central object, and that no better object of reverence and respect could be provided than the Throne. On the restoration of the Emperor to his proper place, therefore, everything possible was done to focus all the scattered elements of national feeling on one point, the focal point being the Throne, and to assure its occupant of the loyal and undying devotion of his subjects. With this end in view, *Shinto*, the ancient faith of the country, which had fallen on bad times, was, to use Professor Chamberlain's expressive simile, "taken out of its cupboard and dusted."<sup>1</sup> With this as a basis, and with bits borrowed here and there from Confucian, and even from Christian sources, what is known to-day as State Shinto was gradually evolved, and the Emperor became the Great High Priest of the nation, the representative of the gods on earth, the spiritual as well as the temporal ruler and governor of his people.

By inventing this new religion, or code as they prefer to call it, the Japanese authorities, as should be clear from what has been written above, had a political motive in view. The primary object was to unite the people and thereby strengthen the country. How well they succeeded is proved by the history of the past sixty years. Now, however, comes the question, how long can the governing classes keep up the people's belief in the divine origin of their ruler, and in the various myths and legends which they are taught from childhood to regard with such unquestioning faith? Will not the authorities have to modify the teachings of State *Shinto* to some extent before it is too late, lest the people, now that they are becoming more sophisticated and democratic in their outlook,

<sup>1</sup> The eclipse of *Shinto* may be said to have started as far back as the 7th Century, after the introduction of Buddhism. The first signs of its revival were visible by the middle of the 18th Century, and had much to do with the subsequent overthrow of the Tokugawas and the restoration of the Emperor to power.

suddenly come to realise that many of these beliefs are entirely unfounded and have been purposely foisted on them for political reasons? In the early days of the Restoration period, the inculcation of, and strict insistence on, these beliefs undoubtedly helped greatly to unify the country and build up a solid wall against possible aggression from without ; but the bulk of the people in those days were uneducated, unsophisticated, and thoroughly docile towards their superiors. Their words they never thought to question. Now, however, with the spread of education and scientific knowledge, the opening up of communications, contact with Western life and thought, and the rapid infiltration of democratic principles and advanced social theories, the danger of a violent reaction against the authorities, who have tried to impose anachronistic beliefs upon them for the purpose of keeping them quiet and obedient, is one that gives food for serious thought. It is not meant to infer by this that there is much likelihood of the people turning against their Emperor and the Imperial House. The loyalty of the nation as a whole to the Throne is beyond question. That loyalty is not likely to be upset, even though the people are free to admit that their Emperor is, after all, a human being like themselves. Their anger, if ever it is aroused, will be directed, not against their Ruler but against those who have used the alleged divinity of the Emperor, and the sanctity of the Throne, as a means to impose their own will upon the country.

An indication of this tendency to see through the actions of the governing authorities was seen as far back as 1912, when Mr. Yukio Ozaki, the veteran liberal politician, took the Government of the day to task for their despotic acts under cover of Imperial commands. "There are people," he said, "... who always mouth 'loyalty' and 'patriotism,' and who advertise themselves as the sole repositories of these qualities, but what they actually do is to hide themselves behind the Throne and



shoot at their political enemies from this secure ambush. The Throne is their rampart. Rescripts are their missiles.”<sup>1</sup>

This is but a foretaste of what may be expected, when the country as a whole comes to realise the abuse of the Throne, made so frequently by those in power, when trying to stem opposition. If the Emperor still lived in strict seclusion, hidden from the eyes of all his people, it might still be possible to keep up this air of mystery and belief in his divinity ; but those days are now past and the people are beginning to think for themselves. A monarch on whom the eyes may never rest may, by this very absence of direct contact, instil a belief of his divinity in the minds of his people ; but, as one rather cynical, albeit shrewd, observer put it, how can the people be expected to retain this belief in the divinity of a sovereign, who appears frequently amongst them and even, on occasion, wears “plus fours” ? They may continue to love and reverence him fully as much as ever they did, just as we British love and reverence our King ; but can they keep up their belief in his divinity ?

The governing authorities in Japan are therefore getting themselves into a perplexing position, and there is little doubt that they realise it. On the one hand there is the fear that, if once they admit that the Emperor, no matter how exalted, is no more than human, they themselves will no longer be able to “hide themselves behind the Throne” (to quote the expression used by Ozaki). They will, therefore, have their own power curtailed considerably. On the other hand, the time has passed when it was possible to keep the Emperor hidden from the eyes of the people. The attempts made to keep up the old pretence about his divinity, by holding up all traffic for prolonged periods, or forcing businessmen and others to cease work

<sup>1</sup> From a speech in the Diet on February 5th, 1912. Quoted by Morgan Young in his “Japan Under Taisho Tenno.” Publishers, Messrs. George Allen and Unwin, London, 1928.



and leave the upper stories of buildings, whenever he is about to pass by (as is always done on such occasions), are no longer accepted with such ready and cheerful willingness as in days gone by.

It would almost seem as though the authorities, realising the trend of the times, are beginning to ask themselves whether it would not be better to modify the teachings of State *Shinto*, with its stout insistence on the divine attributes of the Emperor, to some extent, and in place of the purely secular teaching at schools and colleges, introduce a certain amount of religious instruction as well. Emperor worship, which is the essence of State *Shinto*, may be all right up to a point, but pure unadulterated ethics, divorced from religion, no longer seems to meet the needs of the times. To put it in another way, "cold philosophy and morals," without the spiritual glow of religious faith, no longer suffice to satisfy either the conscious or the subconscious cravings of the people.

Partly due, it would seem, to the dawning realisation that much of the present social unrest in Japan is due to the waning faith of the people in their old gods, and their spiritual yearning for something else to take their place, a movement in favour of a real national religion, one that can be propagated in the schools and educational centres generally, and which will meet the requirements of the times, appears to be developing gradually. As far back as thirty or forty years ago, the famous liberal educator, Fukuzawa, while openly acknowledging that he himself was an agnostic, came forward with the suggestion that Japan should embrace Christianity. True, his advocacy of this step was based on the material, rather than the spiritual, benefits that might be expected to accrue from such a move, as he believed—and probably not without justification—that Japan's international prestige would be greatly enhanced thereby, for he knew well that there is always a tendency in Western countries to regard a non-

Christian nation in a somewhat supercilious manner, as something rather inferior.

Since Fukuzawa's time, however, there has been a growing feeling amongst educated Japanese that, quite apart from any material gains in the matter of international prestige, Japan is in need of an established religion, a real national religion and not a mere code of morals and ethics. The bulk of the people, as statistics show, still cling to Buddhism, or at least give it lip-service; but Buddhist passivism in its present form, even strongly tinged as it is by the correcting influence of Confucian doctrines, which have saved Japan from going the way of so many other Buddhist countries, can never be turned into an active, national religion, such as a virile, go-ahead people like the Japanese require. *Shinto*, of the religious order, though influenced in its development by Buddhist teachings, is likewise not suited to the requirements of modern times, since it is not in any way concerned with the problems of modern life. (With the exception of incest and bestiality, the sins condemned by *Shinto* teaching are physical, not moral, while the purity on which *Shinto* is so insistent, and the impurity which it denounces so vehemently, are both ritualistic in nature and far removed from any question of morality in the strictly spiritual sense.<sup>1</sup>) As, therefore, neither Buddhism nor *Shinto*, in their present form, are suited for adoption as the national religion of Japan, there remains of the three major religions of the country, only Christianity. But, although the influence exercised by Christianity in Japan is infinitely greater, and more far reaching, than the mere numerical strength of its followers would appear to indicate, it too does not, in its present form, appeal to the country as suitable for adoption as a national religion.

<sup>1</sup> Lowell, in his "Occult Japan" (Houghton, Mifflin & Co. New York 1894) refers to the explanation given him by a Japanese friend as to why *Shinto* lacks a moral code. It is, he said, because "... only immoral people need moral laws." The implication, of course, is that the Japanese are far superior morally to other nations!

As one recent writer, well versed in his subject, has very strikingly shown, it will take 10,000 years to make Japan Christian at its present rate of advance.<sup>1</sup>

As none of these three major religions of the country appear suitable for adoption as a national religion, and as Japan is unlikely to turn to Islam (which, although it has left its mark on almost all other Asiatic peoples to a greater or lesser extent, has never influenced Japan to the slightest degree), the only remaining alternative appears to be for the Japanese to produce a synthetic religion of their own. Such a religion, it has been suggested, might be evolved by drawing on the best points of Christianity, Buddhism, and *Shinto*, and adapting them to their own use, in much the same way as, fifty or sixty years ago, they set about copying and adapting the best points of Western civilisation. That some such idea appears to have been accorded serious consideration by some of the leading minds in Japan is indicated by the observation of Dr. Tetsujiro Inouye, a well-known Japanese scholar. Complaining that Christianity in Japan had not been sufficiently Japonicised to capture the minds of the people generally, he declared that it was an evil to have three religions confronting each other without a point of union. "As none of the historical creeds suits the modern world," he went on to say, "there is nothing for it but to construct a new creed, by amalgamating all the best elements of Western and Eastern religions. The present is a very suitable time."<sup>2</sup>

Dr. Inouye was apparently envisaging a new world religion, rather than a specifically national one for his own country; but there can be little doubt that he was thinking primarily of the needs of his own people. Accordingly, he suggested that, as the Western countries were wedded

<sup>1</sup> "Japan and Christ" by the Rev. W. H. Murray Walton and the Rev. M. S. Murao. Published by the Church Missionary Society, London 1928.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* article entitled, "The Religious Convention and the Social Conscience" in the "Japan Advertiser" of June 13th, 1928.

to their own beliefs, it fell to Japan to originate the new religion. To this view he made a distinguished convert in the person of Mr. Tokonami, who was then Home Minister, and early in 1921 Mr. Tokonami himself sponsored an ambitious scheme to bring Christianity, Buddhism, and *Shinto* into closer relationship with each other and with the State. In a circular letter to the Press he declared :

“ Christianity ought to step out of its narrow circle and endeavour to adapt itself to the national sentiments and customs, and to conform to the national polity in order to ensure greater achievements. Japan has adopted a progressive policy in politics and economics in order to share in the blessings of Western civilization. It is desirable to bring Western thought and faith into harmonious relationship with Japanese thought and faith in the spiritual world.”

As the writer of the above quotations shrewdly observed, a scheme which disregarded the irreconcilability of fundamental beliefs was destined to fail ; but the idea of closer co-operation between the religions of the country has persisted, and finally materialised in the typically Western form of a religious convention, held in the summer of 1928, when representative Christians, Buddhists and Shintoists assembled together to discuss how best they could co-operate with one another for the mutual good of all. Amongst the points on which they agreed was, that the Educational Law, one section of which forbids religious ceremonies in schools, should be revised in such a way as to allow for the introduction of comparative religious study in Normal Schools <sup>1</sup> as part of the training of teachers, and that provision should be made for the inclusion of religionists on the committees responsible for preparing the text books used in all government

<sup>1</sup> These “ Normal Schools ” (*Shihan Gakkō*) are the institutions at which candidates for the post of teacher in government schools receive their training.

schools. Other points on which the delegates found themselves in harmony related to the traffic in women, the discrimination from which the outcast *Eta*, or, as they are now called, "special class," suffers, the need of an enlightened labour policy, and the furtherance of international peace. It might, perhaps, be said that these last-named are not strictly matters of religion. Certainly mere agreements on such points can hardly be expected to form the basis of a new religion. Perhaps not; but the very fact that Christian, Buddhist, and *Shinto* leaders are prepared to come together and seek out a way by which they may co-operate together for the moral and spiritual welfare of the country at large, augurs well for the future.

## CHAPTER XIV

### RELIGIOUS FORCES AND THEIR POLITICAL BEARING

#### (PART II)

THAT there is a great call for the awakening of the public conscience on social questions, and that the convention held in the summer of 1928 in Tokyo revealed an increasing sensitiveness, there can be no doubt. For that matter, is it not one of the charges most commonly laid against the Christian Church in all countries, that the Christian religion, as practised at the present day, bears too strongly the mark of a bourgeois religion, that thinks too much of the "respectable" upper and middle-class congregations and too little of the labouring man and his class? To take only Japan itself as an example, Christian missionaries here are now beginning to ask themselves whether they have not, perhaps, begun at the wrong end, by concentrating their efforts mainly on the intellectual classes in the towns and cities to the neglect of the huge masses in the country districts. The Rev. Murray Walton and his Japanese collaborator, Mr. Murao, in their recently published work, *Japan and Christ*, have some hard criticisms to make on this very point, while Toyohiko Kagawa, the self-sacrificing Japanese evangelist, author, and slum-worker, who has done so much for the spread of Christian ideals and for the elevation of the labouring classes in the great industrial centres of Japan, is in no two minds as to where, and how, the Gospel of Christ can best be spread, and where it is most needed. While Kagawa lives a life of unremitting self-sacrifice in the slums and congested centres of the industrial districts, his



co-worker, Sugiyama, works equally untiringly among the poverty-stricken peasantry in the rural districts; for there, too, is the need for religious workers keenly felt. Both Kagawa and Sugiyama are inclined to practise unorthodox methods, and it is perhaps significant of the future of Christianity in Japan that, not only they, but other leading Japanese Christian workers as well—notably, perhaps, Kanzo Uchimura,<sup>1</sup> “the Japanese Carlyle” as he was sometimes called—have shown a very definite leaning towards independence in their teachings and methods of propagation. Their success, in fact, appears to have been due to no small extent to their realisation that, in order to make headway, it is necessary to Japonicise the teachings of Christianity to some extent, so as to make them palatable to their countrymen.

Provided this process of Japonicisation does not go too far, and provided also that it brings good results, the foreign missionary body is not likely to worry itself about it. At least one mission worker<sup>2</sup> has pointed out ways and means by which, with a little readjustment, Japanese customs and ceremonies can be made to serve Christian purposes; or, perhaps it would be better to say, can be Christianised. “An attitude of sufferance (towards the native customs) rather than of destruction, one of deepening and broadening for a more spiritual service to mankind,” is what he advocates. And he goes on to show how the teaching of what he calls “Church-anity” (by which he means Christianity of the Western type) tends not only to destroy much that is Japanese and national, thereby offending the sense of patriotism in the people, but also to hinder “the possibility of a Japanese Church, which would add its own contribution to the world’s interpretation of Christ’s life and work.”

While, however, there are many who think as he does,

<sup>1</sup> Kanzo Uchimura died on March 28th 1930.

<sup>2</sup> W. H. Erskine M.A., author of “Japanese Customs, Their Origin and Value,” published by the Kyo Bun Kwan, Tokyo, 1925.

there are probably just as many, and possibly more, who feel that, if too much leeway is given, the numerical strength of Christianity in Japan will be bought at the expense of the degradation of its highest and most fundamental principles. It is perhaps but natural, therefore, that they should view this prospect with genuine alarm and misgiving. That there are some grounds for this fear can hardly be denied ; for, quite apart from what has already been mentioned about the suggestions, on the part of Japanese statesmen and others (that Christianity ought to “step out of its narrow circle” and “conform to the national policy,” or that it should be ready to assist in the construction of a new creed, “amalgamating all the best elements of Western and Eastern religions,”) it is well to remember that Japan, despite assertions to the contrary, has seldom shown herself prepared to be a mere copier where matters of vital concern are involved. Her genius has always lain in her ability to adopt the best features of other civilisations and, by a process peculiarly her own, to adapt them to her own requirements. To take only her religions and her codes and philosophy as examples, what do we find ? Most of them at the outset were borrowed almost wholesale from abroad ; but, so much have they undergone adjustment and adaptation to meet the needs of her people that, in their present form, they differ greatly from the originals on which they are modelled. The influence of Buddhism on the development of *Shinto*, from the sixth century onwards, was hardly more marked than the influence of the native religion on Buddhism. Buddhist propagandists, seeing the value of compromise, proceeded to explain the deities of the native pantheon as the transmigration of the gods of Mahayana Buddhism and, by equating the Japanese Sun Goddess, from whom the Imperial Family of Japan claim descent, with the great Buddha, established a theological basis upon which all the other deities of both religions could be identified as emanations of this central

life. Both Buddhism and *Shinto* in Japan have shown a willingness to compromise, whenever something was to be gained thereby, and both have shown readiness to borrow freely, and adapt to their own uses, the teachings of other philosophies and creeds, Christianity not excepted. Both have had their ups and downs, Buddhism receiving special official favour at one time and *Shinto* usurping that favoured position from it at another. For many centuries there even existed the so-called *Ryobu-Shinto*, "Two-sided *Shinto*," which was to all intents and purposes an alliance of *Shinto* and Buddhism, developed to a large extent under the influence of the great Buddhist priest, Kobo Daishi, in the ninth century. This "hybrid," as Lowell calls it, was, however, abolished by edict at the time of the Restoration (1868), though something closely akin to it appeared a few years later (1872-5), when the Government toyed for a time with a plan to bring about an amalgamation of Buddhism and *Shinto*, in order to gain support for the re-orientation of the national polity.

The interplay of the various creeds and philosophies in Japan, and the influence they have exerted, not only upon each other but, what is even more important, upon the Japanese as a race, is a subject of immense interest, but far too big to be discussed here. Suffice it to say, that the highest teachings of Christianity, Buddhism, *Shinto* and Confucianism have acted and reacted on one another, and on the lives and thoughts of the people of the land, and continue to do so. Taoism, too, has left its mark, and even to this day there can be traced also the influence of cruder and more primitive religious practices.<sup>1</sup> To

<sup>1</sup> Scenes, of which the Dionysian revels of ancient Athens are the prototype, are still to be witnessed in some of the more remote country districts, where also are to be found traces of phallic worship and gross animism. An interesting instance of the former is given in an article by W. Hautz in the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, a translation of which appeared in the August 1927 issue of "The Living Age."

these must be added such offshoots as *Zen*,<sup>1</sup> *Bushido*, and Nichirenism. *Zen*, with its emphasis on abstract contemplation, its appeal to the warrior class on account of its inculcation of self-discipline, and its bearing on *Ju-jutsu*, a close affinity in many respects to Taoism. *Bushido*,<sup>2</sup> which, though apparently nameless until quite recent years, may be said to be based on the precepts laid down by Yamaga Soho some three hundred years ago for the guidance of the warrior class. Coloured as it is by Buddhist, Confucian and *Shinto* doctrines, it is sometimes difficult to separate from the teachings of religion and philosophy. Nichirenism<sup>3</sup> is a purely national sect of Buddhism, and is the only Buddhist sect with an aggressive outlook.

Remembering the readiness of Japanese Buddhism and *Shinto* to compromise, and to borrow and adapt the teachings of other faiths and codes ; and remembering also how frequently in the past the governing authorities have utilised religion for political purposes, one can well appreciate the somewhat uncompromising stand of those foreign missionaries, who prefer to obtain but few converts, rather than see the rapid advance that would almost certainly be made, if they agreed to the Japonicisation of the religion. From the standpoint of orthodox Christianity, there can be no doubt that they are right in refusing to compromise ; but it is certainly a moot point, which none but theologians can settle, whether more good would not

<sup>1</sup> Well explained and expanded in Kakuzo Okakura's "Book of Tea," (Duffield & Co. New York, 1923), and Harrison's "Fighting Spirit of Japan" (Fisher Unwin, London, 1913).

<sup>2</sup> Chamberlain, in his "Invention of a New Religion," is inclined to belittle *Bushido* as an ethical code of long standing, and maintains that, like State *Shinto*, it is of very recent growth, despite the general belief to the contrary ; but both Nitobe's " *Bushido* " (Teibi Publishing Co. Tokyo, 1909) and Imai's " *Bushido, Past and Present*," (Kanazashi, Tokyo, 1906) are worth study, as helping to explain much that is otherwise difficult of comprehension.

<sup>3</sup> For an exposition of this creed in English, the reader may be referred to Satomi's "Japanese Civilisation" (Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, London, 1923).

ultimately accrue if a Japonicised form of Christianity were permitted.

The main object of religion is, after all, to cultivate the spiritual and moral side of the human race, and to help people to lead clean, honest and upright lives. Those closest in touch with the religious sentiment among the Japanese assert that there is, below the surface, a very real groping for religious guidance among the masses of the people. As, therefore, Christianity, in the form in which it is offered to them, is not sufficiently attractive; and as, on the other hand, there are strong indications that, if presented in a more palatable form—call it Japonicised if you like—it is far more likely to gain acceptance, does it not seem reasonable to agree to compromise to some extent, if the real goal of Christian endeavour is, like that of all other religions, to cultivate the spiritual and moral side of the human race, and to help the people to lead clean, honest, and upright lives? Dean Inge, some three or four years ago, was reported to have put forward much the same idea. He advanced the contention that more good would result from encouraging the Chinese to Christianise their own religions than from trying to turn them into Anglicans or Presbyterians, or to adopt the dogma of any other denomination. His views were strongly criticised in some quarters; but was there not a great deal of sound logic in what he suggested? And if he was right in what he proposed for China, would it not be equally applicable, perhaps even more so, in the case of Japan?

It is, in the final analysis, a political as much as a religious question; for, as shown already, none of the three major religions of Japan, in their present form, appear to make the necessary appeal to the country at large. The people, therefore, with an unsatisfied spiritual craving, tend to turn to the material doctrines of Marx and Lenin. The dangers to be apprehended from recourse to such “gods” should not be minimised, and it is by no means

lacking in significance that, for every Kagawa or Sugiyama working in the slums or rural districts, doing their best to bring spiritual comfort by propagating the gospel of love and good-will, there are many non-religious workers who, while offering material assistance, are spreading social theories that can result in nothing but class hatred.

Communism and Marxism may not, as yet, have penetrated to any great distance beneath the surface ; but unless something better and more uplifting is offered as a substitute, there is no saying how much hold they may not get on the poverty-stricken masses. The charge, sometimes levelled against missionaries, that it is they who are responsible for the people losing faith in their old gods and being left, therefore, in a state of spiritual and, consequently, social unrest, hardly bears water. One former missionary <sup>1</sup> recently made an apt retort to this assertion by asking :

“ Will those who hold that we have no right to interfere with the religions of others, which God meant them to have, ever realise how completely our very commerce with them (which is never deprecated) has already interfered with their religions ? ”

In asking this question, he really gets to the very root of the trouble ; for it is the spread of commerce and industrialism, and the economic conditions consequent thereon, that have done more than anything else to break up the Japanese Family System, to cause the people to lose faith in their old gods, and to leave them spiritually and socially dissatisfied.

Mr. France argues from this, that Christianity should therefore strive to win those left godless and keep them from turning to Marx, Spencer, Mill, or whatever “ prophet ” happens to be to the fore at the time, rather than attempt to turn good and true Buddhists and the

<sup>1</sup> Rev. W. F. France in “ Industrialism in Japan.” Published in London by the S.P.G.



like into Christians. Certainly there is much to be said for this view. But here again we get back to the old stumbling-block. Christianity, unless Japonicised, is not sufficiently attractive. Its teachings make a wide appeal to many. Its dogma appeals but to the few. The curious anomaly is, therefore, offered, of a total numerical strength of Japanese Christians, in these days of tolerance and enlightenment, only about one-fourth (in proportion to the total population of those days) what it was at the opening of the seventeenth century, just prior to the banishment of Christianity from the country.<sup>1</sup>

Numbers, however, are in this case but little index to the extent to which Christian ethics, and Christian teachings generally, have penetrated and influenced the whole life and thought of the country. Numerically, Christianity may have appeared stronger in Japan at the close of the sixteenth century than it is to-day. It may even be argued that the ghastly persecution and martyrdom, which many tens of thousands of Japanese Christians suffered so willingly in those days rather than apostatize, showed that they took their religion seriously. True to some extent though this may be, it has to be remembered that large numbers of those, who then embraced the Christian faith, did so because their feudal lords ordered them to do so, and not from any special spiritual urge on their own part. Even among the many hundreds of martyrs, there were not a few who accepted death out of loyalty to their masters, rather than out of respect to their religion. Mere numerical strength is, therefore, no true index for comparison between the

<sup>1</sup> Although Nestorian Christianity is believed to have been known, to some extent, as far back as the 8th Century, it was not until the arrival of Francis Xavier, in 1549, that Christianity was properly introduced into Japan. By the end of that century, it had made great progress and, for a time, was looked on with favour by the rulers of the country ; but owing mainly to the injection of political intrigues, which threatened the safety and welfare of the State, it was finally suppressed in 1637, the interdiction not being removed until the year 1872, after the reopening of the country to foreign intercourse.

progress of Christianity in Japan three hundred years ago and at the present time. Even if it were, the diffusion of education and learning, the establishment of facilities for travel and intercommunication, and the increased contacts with western life and culture—to mention but a few of many factors—have all, in the intervening period of time, assisted to spread a knowledge and understanding of Christian teachings throughout all classes of Japanese society, in a way that was quite impossible in the sixteenth century. As a result, in spite of the comparatively small numbers of Christians now in Japan, Christian ethics and teaching, and Christianity generally, are far better appreciated, and more widely diffused throughout the country to-day, than ever they were before, and Christian influence is evidenced in every walk, and in every phase, of Japanese life. In education and in the current literature it is to be found, while even the editors of the vernacular Press, and public speakers, are frequently to be found employing quotations and passages from the Bible, in order to clinch or drive home some argument.

This last point is perhaps largely superficial, for even the Devil can quote scripture. It must, in fact, be admitted, that the bulk of Japanese editors and others, who resort to such practices, are attracted by the utilitarian aspects of Christianity rather than by its moral obligations. Nevertheless, the moral influence of Christian teachings is by no means small. It is strikingly shown, for example, by the awakening of the public conscience toward such matters as the betterment of social conditions generally, the raising of the status of women, and the fight against licensed vice and intemperance. Social work may have flourished under Buddhism as far back as the eighth century, as recorded in the Home Department publication, *An Outline of Social Work in Japan*; but, as Dr. Armstrong shows in his *Buddhism and Buddhists in Japan*,<sup>1</sup> organised work for society was scarcely worthy

<sup>1</sup> Published 1927 by the Macmillan Co., New York.

of notice for the next thousand years. It remained for Christianity to lead the way in eleemosynary work, when it was revived once more towards the close of the nineteenth century.

In all these good works, the Christians now have the strong support of Buddhist and other non-Christian individuals and organisations ; but in almost every instance, the original impetus came from Christian workers. Full credit must be given, and is, even by non-Christian Japanese, given them accordingly. It is, in fact, in this ready recognition of their worth, accorded to Christian teachings and principles by Buddhists and others in Japan, and in their readiness to co-operate with Christians in carrying them out, that the greatest hope for the future seems to lie. Buddhism, with the exception of one or two of its sects, is by nature tolerant towards other religions and ready to give them credit where credit is due. *Shinto* likewise, being purely a national religion, is lacking in aggression and is broad-minded in most respects.<sup>1</sup> Hence it comes about that not only do we find Buddhists and Buddhist priests co-operating with Christian workers in prisons, in the slums, and in social work of all kinds. Even more remarkable perhaps is the fact that the Emperor himself, the Great High Priest of the Japanese national faith, has time and time again shown his appreciation of Christian efforts, by rewarding Christian workers and by contributing funds from his own privy purse to the advancement of Christianity in Japan. The Salvation Army, the Y.M.C.A. and the Y.W.C.A. have all been assisted financially by the Emperor at various times in the past. Christian workers like Miss Riddell (leper work), Miss Macdonald (prison work), and Dr. Batchelor (work among the Ainus) have

<sup>1</sup> Thanks to the tolerance of Japanese religions, Japan was spared the horrors of religious wars, such as those that deluged Europe with blood at various times in the past. Even though Christianity was put down with such brutal severity in Japan by the Tokugawas, the blow was aimed, not at Christianity as a religion, but at the political intrigues of the Roman Catholics.

been decorated for their services ; and, when the World Sunday School Convention was held in Tokyo at the close of 1920, the late Emperor Taisho sent a message, which was read at the opening session, wishing success to the workers in Japan and elsewhere, and he himself received the leaders of the Convention in audience. The present Emperor, Hirohito, has shown similar interest and sympathy towards Christian work in Japan, and as recently as last October gave a special audience to Evangeline Booth, the head of the Salvation Army in America, who was on a visit to Japan.<sup>1</sup>

Little less broadminded than this is the action of the two Japanese Buddhist universities, each of which employs a Christian professor to lecture on Christianity, while exchange lectures have been arranged between the Koyasan Buddhist College and the Methodist Kwansai Gakuin.

Christian teachings do, undoubtedly, make a great appeal to the Japanese as a nation, and non-Christian Japanese are showing an increasing readiness to co-operate with Christian bodies in social work of all kinds. But it is one thing to admire Christian teachings and to co-operate with Christian workers for the common good ; it is a very different matter to embrace Christianity in the form in which it is offered. That is the great stumbling-block, and unless the missionaries, and the small but vigorous native Church which they have helped to found, are prepared to recognise a Japonicised form of Christianity, the prospects of any great progress appear to be but small.

There are some who think that the Japanese themselves may, in time, evolve a form of Christianity of their own, in which the fifty or so divisions of Christian work in Japan

<sup>1</sup> Two new precedents were set by this audience. Miss Booth was the first woman to be received in private audience on her own merits, and she was allowed to wear the familiar uniform of the Salvation Army, instead of the regulation Court dress, as she was accorded the treatment of an " officer of a military organisation in the service of humanity."

will be merged. Others, who are well placed to judge of the possibilities for the future, consider such a development to be highly improbable. Another possibility, however, is the creation of a sort of synthetic religion, made up of what are considered to be the best features of Christianity, Buddhism, and *Shinto*. It is even conceivable that Buddhism, which is being roused out of its lethargy by the challenge of Christian activity, may adapt itself to modern needs, and become a real, live, spiritual force once more. Failing any such developments as these, it would seem as though a large section of the people will be left with no other alternative than to continue seeking out their own salvation through Marx and other "prophets" of the same kind. In this event, however, it is to be feared that the future of Japan, in relation to social and spiritual matters, will be far from reassuring.

## CHAPTER XV

### INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION IN JAPAN

AT the outbreak of the Great War Japan was still primarily an agricultural country. A number of flourishing industries, it is true, had already been firmly established; the volume of foreign trade had risen in value from Y. 26,246,000 in 1868, the year that the Emperor was restored to power, to Y. 1,186,837,000 in 1914; and Japan's merchant marine had already risen to sixth place among the trade-carrying fleets of the World. Agriculture and agricultural pursuits, nevertheless, still absorbed the greater part of the nation's time and labour, and Japan had not yet become a dangerous competitor to other countries in any important line of industry.

Japan's wars with China and Russia, in 1894-5 and 1904-5 respectively, had each served to give an impetus to the trade and industry of the country, but the development brought about by these two successful campaigns was small in comparison with the progress made during and since the outbreak of the Great War. New industries have sprung up since 1914 and old ones have developed to an extent that few, if any, observers had thought possible in so short a time, while her merchant marine is now the third largest in the World.

Sadly lacking as she is in all those raw materials which are normally regarded as essential for industrial progress, she has nevertheless, by her energy and skill, overcome many of these natural handicaps. Without iron supplies of her own, and with only coal of inferior quality—the two minerals on which all modern industries are based—



she is, with the help of great quantities of iron ore and good coking coal imported from abroad, rapidly building up for herself an industry which should, within the next few years, make her virtually independent of foreign sources for her growing requirements of pig iron and steel and may, in time, even put her in the position of competing in the World's markets with other producers of these two important basic materials.

Whereas, however, it will probably require another eight or ten years, and possibly even more, before she is in a position to produce sufficient iron and steel to meet her own requirements and leave a surplus over for export, her cotton industry has already developed to such an extent as to strike Lancashire a serious blow. Rapid strides are being made likewise in the development of the woollen, flour, oil, and other industries, for the raw materials of which she is wholly or mainly dependent on outside sources of supply. It is, in fact, one of the most striking features of Japan's foreign trade that, whereas formerly her imports consisted almost entirely of manufactured goods, the bulk of her imports, roughly 54 per cent., now consists of raw materials. These are followed next by semi-manufactured goods, while manufactured goods account for barely 14 per cent. of her total imports, a clear indication of her development as an industrial nation.

As the purpose of this chapter is to show the causes and effects of industrial development in Japan, rather than to describe the development itself, it is not proposed to examine actual statistics in any very great detail. Some figures, however, must be quoted in order to illustrate the progress made in recent years.

These, for clearness' sake, may best be set down in tabular form, as shown over-leaf. From them it will be seen that, despite all that has been heard about industrial depression since the close of the War, the output of Japan's mills and factories, her work-shops and her

foundries, has shown an astonishing increase since 1919, when the post-War boom was at its height.

Output of	Unit	1914	1919	1928 <sup>1</sup>
Raw Silk -	- 1,000 Bales	234	395	583
Cotton Yarn -	- 1,000 Bales	1,666	1,920	2,451
Cotton Cloth -	- 1,000 yards	454,901	738,956	1,363,034
Rayon -	- 1,000 lbs.	—	about 100	16,652
Pig Iron -	- 1,000 tons	302	595	1,076
Steel (finished) -	- 1,000 tons	283	552	1,597
Paper -	- Million lbs.	208	280	1,306
Flour -	- 1,000 bags	13,544	15,908	42,846
Cement -	- 1,000 barrels	4,415	8,013	24,475
Refined Sugar -	- Million piculs	2.8	3.5	8.6
Total Value of Output by fac- tories employing more than 5 men each -	- Million Yen	1,371	6,737	7,377

The development of her industries, and the consequent rise in production during the War period, were but natural, for not only was she required to provide her allies with war material and essential supplies of all kinds, but she was also in a position to exploit the markets from which, by the very circumstances of the situation, they had been forced to withdraw temporarily. What is not so well realised is that, in spite of the post-War slump of 1920, the devastating earthquake of 1923,<sup>2</sup> the financial panic of 1927, and the frequently recurring anti-Japanese boycotts in China, production in all the main industries has registered a large increase since the close of the War, and shows every sign of continuing its upward course, even though temporary set-backs may be expected from time to time.

<sup>1</sup> At the time of writing, the figures for 1929 are not yet available, except in the case of Steel (1,850,000 tons), Paper (1,418,000,000 lbs.), Flour (43,159,000 bags), and Cotton yarn (2,792,000 bales). Pig Iron and Steel figures are for Japan Proper, excluding Korean and Manchurian production. The same applies to all the other figures given.

<sup>2</sup> Material damage and loss caused by the earthquake and resultant fire has been estimated at roughly Y. 5,506,386,000, while more than 150,000 persons lost their lives.

The continued increase in production is a striking proof of the progress being made in the industrialisation of the country. Many other such proofs could be given, but a few only must suffice. In the silk industry, for example, there was a time, not so long since, when all the reeling was done by hand, by peasants working in their own homes. This practice has not by any means died out even yet. Like cocoon raising, silk reeling still provides an important subsidiary source of income for the agricultural communities; but machine reeling is rapidly replacing hand reeling, and most of this is now done in factories, while the production of silk tissues shows a large increase since pre-War days and the number of operatives employed in the silk industry has increased six-fold since 1914.

The silk industry is, of course, the only industry of first-rate importance that is founded on raw material produced in Japan itself, and raw silk occupies the position of greatest importance in Japan's export trade, the amount exported being valued at more than Y. 700,000,000 a year. Silk tissues, and other products of silk exported, bring the total value of the silk exports up to over Y. 900,000,000, an increase of about 450 per cent. since 1914.<sup>1</sup> Whereas, therefore, the main feature of most of her industries is that they purchase raw material abroad and turn it into manufactured articles, the silk industry is engaged primarily in the production of the raw material for export to other countries and does relatively little in producing manufactured goods from the raw material thus produced. Many economists criticise this practice and contend that it would be more profitable to export the bulk of the silk in the manufactured, rather than in the raw form. In years to come, it is quite conceivable that this recommendation will be carried out to some extent. If so, the process of industrialisation will thereby be ad-

<sup>1</sup> Export of raw silk in 1929 amounted to Y. 781,065,000 and exports of silk tissues etc. to Y. 162,950,000.

vanced still further ; but this is anticipating events. We must turn back once more, therefore, to consider the progress already made in the industrialisation of the country.

Some of this progress is clearly illustrated by the figures tabulated above. A few more examples may well be added. In the cotton industry, for instance, the number of spindles employed rose from  $2\frac{1}{2}$  million in 1914 to  $3\frac{1}{2}$  million in 1919. Since then, it has risen to over  $6\frac{1}{2}$  million at the present time, while the quantity of raw cotton imported for use in the mills rose from 6,246,000 piculs in 1914 to 8,006,000 in 1919 and to 9,667,000 in 1928.

Like the cotton industry, the wool, flour, iron and steel industries are based almost wholly on raw material obtained from abroad. The following table of imports will help still further, therefore, to illustrate the progress made in these particular fields of endeavour.

Imports	Unit	1914	1919	1928	1929
Raw Wool -	1,000 lbs.	12,635	51,376	115,697	107,333
Wool Tops -	1,000 lbs.	8,196	4,319	1,715	869
Wheat -	1,000 piculs	1,962	4,298	10,957	12,231
Iron Ore -	1,000 tons	298	621	1,616	Unknown

The great increase in raw wool imports and the falling off in wool tops well illustrates the tendency noted earlier in this article, that imports of raw materials for use in the mills and factories are increasing. In this connection it may be noted that, although large quantities of woollen yarns and textiles are still being imported, there is already a small export of woollen tissues and an improvement in the quality of cloth produced.

Not only does this afford a further proof of industrial progress; it also helps to discount much of the pessimism expressed in some quarters regarding the adverse balance of trade. As an increasingly large part of Japan's imports consists of raw material for manufacture, and of machinery, electric motors, and dynamos for plant, the present excess of imports over exports is not so serious a matter as the figures appear to indicate.

In this respect, the adverse balance of trade may be compared with the National Debt, the steady rise of which calls forth gloomy forebodings from time to time. As nearly half this debt represents money borrowed for productive and profitable enterprises, such as railways, telephones, harbour construction, electric development and the like, the alarm expressed in some quarters at the rise witnessed in recent years is not so well founded as at first sight it might seem to be.<sup>1</sup>

Similarly, while it is true that Japan is importing more foodstuffs than formerly and is, to some extent, becoming more dependent on outside sources for her food supplies, the rise in imports of wheat has less to do with this question of feeding her people than might appear.<sup>2</sup> This wheat is for use as raw material for her flour industry, an industry which, during the past few years, has developed a very promising export trade. It is, in fact, only since the close of the War that exports of flour have figured in her foreign trade returns; yet it now occupies sixth place in the list of the thirty principal commodities exported. The year 1927 showed an export of Y. 14,270,000 under this heading, a year later this had increased to Y. 24,718,000, and last year, 1929, it rose to Y. 30,525,000.

In view of the keen competition she has brought to bear on the cotton markets of the World, despite her dependence on foreign sources for the raw material,<sup>3</sup> it is by no means inconceivable that, before many years have passed, she will also be a dangerous competitor in flour and in woollen goods as well, now that a beginning has been made. Even in iron and steel, as observed elsewhere, the day may come when she launches forth to capture markets for

<sup>1</sup> From Y. 2,579,000,000 in 1918, the National Debt has risen to close on Y. 6,000,000,000 at the present time.

<sup>2</sup> Imports of "food and drink" accounted for 14.5% of her total imports in 1928 and 12.2% in 1929.

<sup>3</sup> Cotton Tissues Exports (million square yards) 1914, 374; 1919, 875; 1929, 1789.

herself. In so far as these last two are concerned, however, it has to be remembered that she is handicapped, not only by lack of iron ore but also by lack of good coking coal. Moreover, although she has increased her output of pig iron more than  $3\frac{1}{4}$ -fold, and her production of steel over six-fold since 1914, her own requirements of these two materials continue to rise rapidly and, as the following figures show, large imports of both are still needed to meet them :

Imports (tons)		1914	1919	1928	1929
Pig Iron	-	169,094	283,166	569,214	654,055
Steel (finished)	-	395,988	721,831	223,837	722,341

Mention of the lack of good coking coal leads naturally to the question of fuels and fuel substitutes generally. Under this heading come three industries of great importance to the nation's welfare, namely coal, oil, and electricity. Coal is not lacking ; in fact, Japan is able to export about Y. 25,000,000 worth yearly ; but it is of poor quality. Oil is likewise produced in certain sections of the country, mainly in the north-west coast regions, and was, until almost up to the time of the Great War, sufficient for her needs. Those days, however, are now gone by, and importation from abroad has increased by leaps and bounds during the past few years. Exclusive of the oil imported by the Japanese Navy, which brings in several hundred-thousand tons yearly for its own immediate use and for building up huge emergency reserves, the importation in 1929 amounted to 526,000,000 gallons<sup>1</sup> as against roughly 465,000,000 gallons in 1928 and 276,700,000 in 1927, an increase of nearly two-fold in two years.

The rapid increase in oil consumption is, in itself, a good indication of the progress being made in industrialising

<sup>1</sup> Crude and Heavy Oil 420,000,000 gallons ; Benzine 9,800,000 gallons ; Kerosene 90,000,000 gallons ; Lubricating Oil 6,570,000 gallons. Home production, including Formosa, in 1929 amounted to roughly 14,000,000 gallons in all.



the country, for it illustrates the growing demands, not only of her navy and her merchant marine, which have been changing from coal-burning to oil-burning fleets, but also of her air services, her fishing fleets, her motor lorries, cars, and mechanical transport in general, as well as her factories, electric light, gas and other industrial plants.

In so far as her electric light and power plants are concerned, oil is largely taking the place of coal for generating purposes, though hydro-electric undertakings are increasing at an even greater rate and now occupy the major part of this field of endeavour ; and this brings us to the last of the three chief fuels and fuel substitutes, electricity. At the outbreak of the War in 1914, electric power capacity stood at 716,000 kilowatts. By 1919 this had risen to 1,133,000 and by the end of last year it was in the region of 3,750,000 kilowatts. The proportion of hydro-electric power to the whole in these same three years was 62.7 per cent., 70.6 per cent., and 75 per cent. (approximately) respectively, while the total paid up capital invested in the electric industry was estimated to have increased from Y. 460,355,000 to close on Y. 3,000,000,000 during the same period of time.

Owing to her special geographical features and her large annual rainfall, which is about double the average for the whole world, the possibilities of further developing the hydro-electric industry are immense. This should do much to overcome the handicap imposed by the lack of good coal and the meagreness of her oil resources.

Having now shown something of the progress made in most of the main industries, it remains to mention but one more which, since the outbreak of the War in 1914, has risen rapidly to a position of primary importance. Prior to the War, Japan relied largely on foreign sources for supplies of chemicals and dyes to meet her own requirements. The cutting off of these sources of supply, at a time when they were urgently required, led to the establishment of numerous plants for their production in Japan

itself. A firm basis for what is now a flourishing industry was thereby laid, the value of chemical output rising from Y. 175,849,000 in 1914 to Y. 776,943,000 in 1919, and to Y. 935,617,000 in 1928. Home consumption, however, has shown a rapid increase in recent years, on account of the greatly increasing demand for chemical fertilisers. In addition, therefore, to the chemicals now produced in the country, large quantities are imported yearly. The main interest of these imports lies, in fact, in their relation to the manufacture and supply of fertilisers which, as Messrs. Sansom and Macrae emphasise, in their *Report on Economic Conditions in Japan*,<sup>1</sup> " . . . is a question of vital importance to Japan, in view of the intensive methods of cultivation which she employs." How great is the demand for artificial fertilisers is seen by the fact that 2,260,822 tons were imported last year, valued at Y. 180,251,000.

The demand for ammonium sulphate in particular is greatly on the increase and, while imports of this material are now somewhere around 300,000 tons yearly (they rose as high as 377,638 tons in 1929), strenuous efforts are being made to increase its production in Japan itself, the steps taken including the erection and extension of great nitrogen fixing plants, both in Japan and in Korea. As a result, domestic production has risen from 160,000 tons in 1925 to over 250,000 tons last year (1929), and plans are on foot to raise it to 400,000 tons in the near future.

In every direction, therefore, is seen the rapid progress and development of industry, and of industrial undertakings of one kind or another ; and this development is reflected to no small extent in the expansion of her foreign trade. Despite all that has been heard about business depression in Japan during recent years, and despite the economic blows caused by the post-war slump of 1920, the Great Earthquake of 1923, and the financial panic of 1927, the customs figures for imports and exports appear to show that pessimism is unwarranted. Much is heard of

<sup>1</sup> Issued in London, 1928, by the Department of Overseas Trade.

the so-called " peak " years of the post-War Boom, 1919 and 1920, when the total of Japan's foreign trade rose to figures far above any that had been reached hitherto. So great is the stress laid on the prosperity of these two years (though the slump actually set in before 1920 was over), that it might almost be imagined that the records then set have never been surpassed. Actually, however, 1925, 1926, and 1929 have each produced a greater total ; and although the Y. 4,000,000,000 mark had never been reached till the two post-War Boom years, the volume of trade has never dropped below that mark since 1923. From Y. 1,186,837,000 in 1914, trade rose rapidly to Y. 3,630,145,000 in the final year of the War, and in 1920 reached what was then the peak figure of Y. 4,284,570,000. In that same year, however, came the slump, and down it went the following year to only two-thirds of that amount ; but by 1924 it was up once more over the Y. 4,000,000,000 mark, and 1925 saw the previous record of 1920 exceeded. Never, in fact, since 1923 has it been lower than  $3\frac{1}{2}$  times the value of foreign trade transacted in the year that saw the outbreak of the War.

This does not, of course, mean that the actual volume of foreign trade has increased 350 per cent. since 1914. Allowance has to be made for the lowered value of the Yen since pre-war days, and the wide fluctuations in the rate of exchange. Even, however, when these variations in exchange rates and the depreciated value of the Yen are taken into consideration, it will be found that foreign trade has expanded to at least double what it was in 1914, while domestic trade is estimated to have increased in about the same proportion since the opening year of the War.

This great expansion of foreign and domestic trade has only been made possible by diverting an ever-increasing proportion of the populace from agricultural pursuits to commerce and industry. This, in turn, has resulted in a steady drift from the rural districts to the towns and cities.

Materially this has, of course, been of great benefit to the country at large ; but, as in the case of England and other countries, the process of industrialisation has brought many evils in its train. Industrial unrest in the shape of strikes and labour disputes, class feeling, slums, unemployment and all the other attendant ills of industrialism, have made their appearance where formerly they were unknown, and, as has been shown in previous chapters, the whole social and economic fabric of the country has been subjected to a violent process of change. A situation has arisen that requires the most careful handling, and the most clear-headed statesmanship is needed to avoid the many pitfalls which bestrew the path of industrial development that Japan has elected to follow. Not only is cool-headed statesmanship required for the proper control and guidance of the domestic situation ; it is needed, too, in the field of foreign policy, for Japan's progress as an industrial nation is largely dependent on the friendship and goodwill of her neighbours. Without that peace and friendship, she can obtain neither the raw materials on which her mills and factories depend, nor the markets which she requires for the disposal of her manufactured goods. Little wonder then, that in recent years she has shown herself to be such an earnest advocate of world peace.

While it would be giving her unwarranted credit to say that she has adopted the policy of industrialisation for the express purpose of assisting the cause of peace, it would be hardly too much to say that, having now committed herself so definitely to the policy of industrial development, she has put herself into a position in which she has everything to gain, and little or nothing to lose, by doing all in her power to see that peace and order are maintained. It may be well, therefore, to examine the main causes leading her to embark so definitely on the policy of industrialisation, rather than return, on the conclusion of the late war, to her former status as an agricultural nation.

Before doing so, however, attention may be drawn to a significant feature of Japan's foreign trade, which helps to illustrate what has been said above, about the primary importance of peaceful conditions for its proper development. This is, that America and China, the two countries always linked together in the minds of those discussing the possibilities of any future war in the Far East, are far and away Japan's best customers and suppliers of her needs. America takes over 40 per cent. of her exports and supplies about 30 per cent. of her imports, while China purchases roughly 25 per cent. of her exports and provides about 17 per cent. of her imports. This being so, the effect that any serious disturbances or warlike operations, in which either of these two countries may be involved, is bound to have on Japan's trade, is obvious.

Since her exports to America consist mainly of one commodity, namely raw silk, a trade which has certain limits of expansion, her trade with China is, in many respects, of even more vital importance. This is well brought out in the British official report on economic and financial conditions in Japan (June, 1929),<sup>1</sup> which also stresses the peculiarity of Japan's export trade in that "silk and cotton in various forms account for two-thirds of its value." She is therefore, as the compilers of this report go on to say, "peculiarly dependent upon favourable conditions in the countries which are the chief purchasers of those products, the United States for silk and China and British India for cotton goods. Consequently, disturbed conditions, or any other causes which reduce purchasing power in China or British India, affect seriously the total volume of her exports and, indirectly, her purchasing power in foreign markets in general." With this slight digression we can now proceed.

While it is true that the war gave a considerable impetus to the development of existing industries in Japan and to the creation of new ones, a number of other factors

<sup>1</sup> See p. 23.

combined to make it expedient for her to commit herself to the policy of industrialisation, once and for all, after it was over. Of these, four in particular are deserving of notice, as each has played an important part in the developments of the past few years. Briefly stated these were :

(1) The level of productive capacity already attained and the severe economic blow that would have been sustained, if some way had not been found to maintain that level and to utilise the great industrial plants that had been erected at such heavy cost during the War years.

(2) The lesson taught by the War, that it was unwise to depend too much on other countries for essential requirements.

(3) The growing realisation that, as large numbers of immigrants from Japan were unwelcome in most countries, industrialisation offered the only hopeful alternative as a solution to the question of surplus population.

(4) The inability of those who had once tasted of city life and turned to industrial labour, to return to the country and settle down quietly and contentedly once more to agricultural pursuits.

To understand the significance of these factors, it is necessary to examine them in rather more detail, starting with the first of the four mentioned.

Although the ending of the War Boom resulted in a large number of commercial and industrial concerns going under, those that collapsed entirely were mainly those of mushroom growth. Taking advantage of the great opportunities offered by the War for enriching themselves, they had sprung up rapidly into being ; but, being inherently unstable, they had faded away with equal rapidity as soon as the period of abnormal prosperity had ceased. The majority of the big firms and industrial undertakings, on the other hand, were on a sufficiently strong foundation to weather the storm by making necessary readjustments. To such an extent, however, had



they increased their productive capacity, during the War years and the immediate post-War boom that followed, that it was essential for them to bend every effort to find markets for the goods which they were capable of turning out. Unless this could be done, the great plants which they had erected at so much cost must have remained permanently idle and, with such a drag as this on their hands, they themselves would, sooner or later, have been bound to suffer the same fate as the smaller concerns that had already collapsed. Thanks to their efforts, new markets were found and old ones extended, and the yearly production of manufactured and semi-manufactured goods, despite the temporary check caused by the post-War slump, has increased many-fold, as the figures quoted earlier in this chapter show clearly. In most cases, therefore, not only has work been found for the machinery and plant of all kinds, that came into being in order to fulfil wartime requirements ; extensions have also been made on a large scale and productive capacity increased even more.

This increase in productive capacity owes not a little to the second of the four factors noted above, the lesson taught by the War regarding the inadvisability of placing too much dependence on other countries for essential supplies. Before the War, Japan had felt but little worry on this score. She herself, it is true, had been poorly endowed by Nature with raw materials, but there was never any difficulty in obtaining them from abroad. For that matter, not having, up to then, advanced to anything like her present degree of industrialisation, her requirements were comparatively modest. True, her wars with China and Russia had served to open her eyes to some extent to her dependence on other countries for her requirements of such materials as iron and steel ; but it was not until the outbreak of the World War that the full significance of her position was brought home to her. In the wars of 1894 and 1904, she had no difficulty in ob-

taining all she needed from abroad, but the War of 1914-18 had not been long in progress before she discovered that, not only had her usual sources of supply been cut off, on account of Europe and America requiring all they had for themselves, but that she herself was being asked to supply her allies.

The consequent expansion of her own productive facilities, to meet these demands, has already been mentioned ; but the important point to be noted here is that, as a result of the lesson thus learned, Japan resolved, that never again would she rest satisfied until she had made herself self-supporting in the matter of iron and steel and other similarly essential supplies. In the Great War she had allies, and was, to some extent, enabled to profit by her position, far removed as she was from the main theatres of active operations. The time might come, however, when she found herself fighting alone and cut off from all her normal sources of supply. Such a contingency might be extremely remote, but it was one that she felt she could no longer afford to overlook. She has, therefore, set herself seriously to the task of making herself as self-supporting as circumstances permit. With that end in view, her pig-iron and steel producing plants are being expanded, to a sufficient extent to provide for her own domestic requirements ; large supplies of oil are purchased yearly from abroad and stored away as a reserve in case of need ; and various other industries are being encouraged to take such steps as are considered necessary for the attainment of this self-supporting policy.<sup>1</sup>

The natural outcome of all this has been the furtherance of industrialisation, for by no other means can the country be made self-supporting in the matter of manufactured and semi-manufactured goods. Now let us turn our attention, therefore, to the third great factor in the phenomenal development of Japanese industries during the past

<sup>1</sup> This policy includes the search for, and development of, sources of raw material strategically controllable in war time.

ten or twelve years. This is the important question of surplus population and how to dispose of it.

During the two and a half centuries that preceded the reopening of Japan to foreign intercourse seventy years ago, the population remained more or less stationary, around the 30,000,000 mark. Being, in those days, an agricultural nation with modest requirements, the country was self-supporting, and there was generally food and work for all. With the ending of her policy of self-imposed seclusion, however, there followed a sudden increase in population. At first, this gave little cause for worry; but, as the years went on and the annual increase became more pronounced, Japan, with her limited natural resources and restricted area of inhabitable land, found herself faced with the serious problem of finding food and work for her surplus millions. Intensive agriculture helped, to some extent, to provide more foodstuffs,<sup>1</sup> and the opening of new industries helped to absorb part of the increase in population; but the pressure soon became such that the only real solution seemed to be emigration abroad.

Unfortunately, the entry of large numbers of Japanese immigrants into the lands which appeared most suitable for them, was not welcomed by the people to whom those lands belonged. Restrictions were therefore placed on their entry. That Japan recognised the reasonableness of these restrictions, in that they were due primarily to the economic aspect of the situation, is shown by her willingness to enter into agreements with the countries concerned for the control of emigration from her own shores. Nevertheless, it hit her badly, for it meant that the possibility of easing the growing pressure of population by this means could no longer be considered. The culminating point was reached when the American Exclusion

<sup>1</sup> Statistics show that, contrary to general belief, the increased production of foodstuffs has more than kept pace with the increase of population.

Law was passed in 1924, for it added unnecessary insult to unavoidable injury.

Even the expansion of her own territory, brought about by her wars with China and Russia and by the annexation of Korea, failed to provide her with the type of territory adaptable for colonisation on a large scale, as the bulk of those for whom new homes were needed were of the working classes, and these could not hope to compete successfully with the cheap native labour already available in plenty in those lands. How little, in fact, the additions made to the Japanese Empire, since 1895, have helped to absorb her surplus population, may be seen by the following figures which show the approximate numbers of Japanese in each at the present time :

Korea -	-	-	-	-	411,000
Formosa -	-	-	-	-	183,000
Kwantung -	-	-	-	-	87,000
S. Saghalien -	-	-	-	-	9,000
Mandate Islands -	-	-	-	-	7,000

Japan's new possessions therefore, though of great value to her from a financial, economic, and politico-strategic standpoint, have done little or nothing to relieve the pressure of population, as they have absorbed less than 700,000 all told, out of a total increase of more than 20,000,000 during the same period of years. Moreover, this figure takes no account of the fact that a great many Japanese were already in those places, even prior to their incorporation into the Empire, while even the net absorption has been offset, to no small extent, by the migration of many tens of thousands of Koreans and others into Japan.<sup>1</sup>

The fact is that Japan, while favoured geographically by a naturally strong strategic position, has been poorly endowed by Nature in the matter of those natural resources which are so needful for an industrial nation, and the economic position of her people is such, that they are

<sup>1</sup> Koreans in Japan are said to number about 200,000. Most of them are of the coolie class.

virtually debarred from turning to colonisation as a means of solving the population question. If they turn to West or South, to America, Canada, or Australia, they find themselves unwelcome, because their entry would introduce a cheaper standard of wages and, therefore, of living. If they turn to the neighbouring Asiatic mainland, they find themselves unable to compete with the cheaper standard of the native labour.

Gradually, therefore, Japan has been forced to realise, that she can no longer hope to solve the problem of her surplus population by means of emigration. As the days of territorial conquest for colonisation purposes have long gone by, and as such means cannot even be considered, the only remaining alternative of any great importance, as a solution to her difficulties, is to industrialise the country still further. Agriculture can absorb no more labour. Emigration and colonisation on a large scale are out of the question. Birth-control, though seriously considered, is never likely to be adopted as a national policy.<sup>1</sup> It is to industrialisation, therefore, that, despite certain obvious handicaps, Japan now looks as the main means for relieving the pressure of her population, a population which has nearly doubled itself in the last fifty years (rising from 33,301,000 in 1873 to 59,737,000 at the time of the last Census in 1925), and which is now increasing at the rate of close on 1,000,000 yearly.

This, then, is the third factor of importance, in bringing about the great industrial development witnessed in Japan in recent years. There remains but one more to consider.

This, as noted elsewhere, is the inability of those, who have once tasted of urban life and turned their hands to industrial labour, to return to the country and settle down

<sup>1</sup> The attitude towards the question of birth control has undergone a great change in the past three or four years. So strong was the opposition towards it until quite recently, that Mrs. Sanger was forbidden to speak on it in Japan; yet now, it is openly discussed, and even advocated in the vernacular Press, and birth-control clinics have been opened, in Tokyo and Osaka, for the poor.

quietly and contentedly once more to agriculture. It is not merely the physical difficulty of finding work for themselves on the land. It goes deeper than this, for it is rather the psychological and unsettling effect of their experience in the towns and cities, that unfits them to return to the soil. The peasant may leave his fields and migrate to the towns and cities, in search of the El Dorado which he believes awaits him there; but, having once tasted of city life, no matter how distasteful it may be to him in certain respects, and no matter how disillusioned he may have become as a result of his experiences, he finds it next to impossible to return to the peaceful, humdrum life of the country and settle down once again to the drudgery of work in the paddy-fields.

What, then, was to become of the tens of thousands, nay, hundreds of thousands of workers, who had flocked to the towns and cities during the War Boom, attracted thither by the, to them, fabulous wages offered for their services? As late as 1880 there were only 200 factories, employing in all no more than 1500 workers, in the whole of Japan. By 1921 there were as many as 49,380 factories and roughly 1,700,000 workers.<sup>1</sup> More than half of these were women and children, and most of this great increase had taken place during the War and immediate post-war period, for in 1914 the total number of factory workers stood at only 948,000. Within the space of seven years, therefore, the number of factory workers had nearly doubled, and all these men and women had been brought into contact with new standards of life and new ideas of living.

Nor was the increase of city workers confined to factory

<sup>1</sup> The total number of factories at the end of 1928 stood at 55,948, of which all but 223 were classified as "middle and small." The immense preponderance of minor factories and workshops results in much unnecessary waste and competition, and in uneconomic methods of production and distribution. The question of rationalisation as a remedy is, therefore, under serious discussion. See p. 67 regarding present number of workers.



operatives. Trade and commerce, too, had naturally witnessed an immense expansion similar to industry, entailing the enrolment of a great new army of commercial workers for the towns and cities. By 1920, the number so employed stood at 1,109,000, while transport workers, casual labour, and other categories of urban labour, had likewise shown a great increase.

Something like 50 per cent. of the nation is still engaged in agriculture ; but, as indicated by the fact that, between 1894 and 1925, the percentage of the population living in towns of over 10,000 inhabitants rose from 16 to 36.6, there is a steady shifting of the population from the country, where the standard of life is low, to urban employment, in which wages are relatively high. As shown elsewhere, at no time was this migration from country to city more pronounced than during the War and immediate post-War period.

The slump that followed in 1920, brought ruin to numberless commercial and industrial concerns of mushroom growth, and threw large masses of these new industrial and commercial workers out of employment ; but the die had been cast. There was no possibility of reversing the former process by starting a "back-to-the-land" movement. Even so comparatively short an experience of urban life and employment, had rendered the bulk of these workers unfit for a permanent return to rural life and occupation. All they could do, therefore, was to compose themselves in patience as best they could, and wait till better times in trade and industry offered them the chance of re-employment.

That the unemployment question did not, at this juncture, assume more serious dimensions, was in no small part due to the workings of the Japanese family system. From ancient times, as must be clear from what has been written elsewhere, this system has played an important part in the social structure of Japan, and although the changing economic conditions of modern times are inevitably

tending to break it up, it did, undoubtedly, do much to alleviate the sufferings of the people and to prevent greater chaos, both at the time of the post-War slump in 1920 and in the days following the disastrous earthquake and fire, which smote Japan three years later.

Under this system, when an individual is ill, or for any reason helpless, he can rest assured of a haven of refuge in the home of his parents, or of some near relative. However poor they may be, his right to share their roof and rice will not be questioned. Even to-day, the majority of industrial and other city workers can count on bed and board in their old homes if, owing to trade depression or other such cause, they find themselves out of employment. It was but natural, therefore, that great numbers of those, who would otherwise have been left in desperate straits by the post-War slump and by the Great Earthquake, returned to their homes in the country districts, there to wait until the firms and factories were ready to re-absorb them once more.

Industrial life in Japan is but little more than a generation old. Such a practice, therefore, is still possible, as most of the workers in urban occupations still have parents or near relatives, living in the country districts, ready to welcome them back for a time to the land from which they came. The future, however, presents a problem, the seriousness of which is well brought out by the Rev. W. F. France, in his *Industrialism in Japan*.<sup>1</sup> After quoting the example of the Great Earthquake of 1923 and asking the question, "Where would the masses go if an area of one hundred and fifty miles in diameter was destroyed by earthquake in the north of England," he goes on to say:

"And herein is the gravest of social problems. Increased population always follows industrialism. Already the second generation of workers has appeared in the cities; and while they may still count on their grandparents or their parents' brothers and sisters in the

<sup>1</sup> Published in London, 1928, by the S.P.G

country, yet when the third and fourth generations arise, then they can only look to the industries which have hitherto supported them, for the land will receive them no more."

Thanks to the family system, Japan has not, up to now, had to face the problem of unemployment on a large scale, though it has been causing serious concern to the authorities during the past year or two.<sup>1</sup> The passage quoted above, shows clearly how the situation is changing, and serves as a warning of what may be expected in years to come.

These, then, are the main features in regard to the progress of industrialisation in Japan, its causes and the effects produced. Many other factors bearing closely on the industrial development of the country have, of course, to be taken into consideration, if a detailed study of the subject is to be made, factors such as government assistance by means of subsidies and high tariffs, political influence, the immense influence wielded in all the most important branches of industry by the great business houses, such as Mitsui and Mitsubishi and their numerous subsidiaries,<sup>2</sup> the concentration of financial power in the hands of certain banks,<sup>3</sup> the economic development of Manchuria with its vast latent resources of food and raw material, and the huge investment of Japanese capital there and in China generally.<sup>4</sup> All these, and other factors besides, call for careful thought. Enough, however, has been written to give some idea of the rapid pro-

<sup>1</sup> Official returns for the last year-end put the total of unemployed at rather over 315,000, but the actual number is probably far greater.

<sup>2</sup> The nominal capital of companies controlled by Mitsui is put at Y. 1,261,810,000, those by Mitsubishi at Y. 916,050,000, those by Yasuda at Y. 688,673,000, and those by Sumitomo at Y. 260,575,000.

<sup>3</sup> Although there were as many as 1023 commercial banks in Japan at the end of 1928, nearly 60% of the total deposits were in the hands of the five largest, while 80% of the whole amount was controlled by thirteen.

<sup>4</sup> Japan's investments in Manchuria are placed at roughly Y. 2,000,000,000.

gress made in the industrialisation of the country during the past few years, the actuating causes of this industrial development, and the changes it is bringing about in the social and economic life of the country. From being a customer of the industrial countries of the West, Japan has become a competitor; from a purchaser of manufactured goods she has become a producer. From agriculture she is turning more and more to commerce and industry, and from rural occupations her people are turning to the towns and cities for a livelihood. The whole social and economic fabric of the country is undergoing a process of change, while labour disputes, unemployment, slums, and all the other well-known concomitants of industrial revolution are coming to the fore. With emigration abroad ruled out, however, on account of differences in economic standards, and with her own possessions overseas more valuable to her for development by native labour, assisted by Japanese money and brains, than for colonisation by her own surplus millions, Japan's main hope for solving the problem of a rapidly increasing population seems to lie in the industrialisation of the country. It is to this, therefore, that she has turned.

## CHAPTER XVI

### JAPAN AND ARMAMENT REDUCTION

TEN years ago Japan was an object of no small suspicion and ill-disguised mistrust. By many she was regarded as the Prussia of the Far East. In China and on the neighbouring mainland of Eastern Asia generally, her policy was marked by acts of aggression, many of which, though small and of little consequence, were purposely magnified by skilful propaganda on the part of Chinese and others with axes of their own to grind. With her armies spreading over and consolidating their hold on large areas in Shantung, North Manchuria, and Eastern Siberia ; with her land forces increasing in size and strength ; with her Navy undergoing even greater expansion ; and with the cost of her armed forces accounting for nearly 50 per cent. of her total national expenditure, foreign observers could hardly be blamed if they viewed the future prospects with some alarm, and concluded that Japan was bent on carrying out a policy of territorial expansion and aggression. Then came the Washington Conference.

That Japan's acceptance of the invitation to attend this meeting indicated a change of heart, seemed hardly credible to those who had come to regard her as the successor to the Prussian mantle of militarism. With the taciturn Admiral Kato, the " father " of the famous " 8-8 " naval programme, as her chief naval delegate, it seemed to many unlikely that Japan would agree to any drastic reduction of naval armaments. The fact that it was widely noised abroad that Japan was to assume something of the rôle of a prisoner in the dock, subjected to searching enquiries

and criticisms from the delegates of the other nations assembled there, led many to fear that the Japanese would, on the contrary, assume an attitude of arrogance and unwillingness to compromise.

Those who held such beliefs were quickly disabused. From the very outset, Japan showed a broadminded readiness to fall in with all reasonable proposals put forward for the mutual reduction of armaments. By none was a more dignified and statesmanlike stand taken than by the stern-visaged, costive Admiral Kato. The completion of the great fleet he had sponsored was cancelled, large numbers of existing vessels were scrapped, and Japan's dreams of possessing the most powerful navy afloat were abandoned by her acceptance of the 5-5-3 ratio for capital ships, an acceptance which connoted her relegation to a permanent position of inferiority to both Britain and America in the matter of naval strength. Nor was this her only concession. She promised also to withdraw her troops from Shantung, North Manchuria, Eastern Siberia and Saghalien, and to recall her garrison from Hankow. These pledges were duly fulfilled, and within a year she had, in addition, voluntarily drawn up a scheme to reduce the size of her Standing Army. This action was followed two years later by a second, and even more drastic, cut in the size of her land forces, a reduction likewise effected entirely of her own volition, without outside pressure of any sort.<sup>1</sup>

As this change from an aggressive to a pacific policy has a close bearing on the attitude she has adopted ever since, it may be well to examine briefly the underlying causes that brought it about. A number of contributory causes might be adduced to account for the change, but only the more important of these need be given here. Stated

<sup>1</sup> For details concerning these two cuts, the reader may be referred to the present author's work, "Some Aspects of Japan and Her Defence Forces." Publishers, Messrs. Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co. London, and Messrs. J. L. Thompson & Co. Kobe. It may be remarked here, that a further cut is now under consideration.



briefly, these were: the removal of the threat to Japan's scheme of national defence implied by America's proposal to construct first-class naval bases in Guam and the Philippines; the failure of the Japanese military excursions on the mainland of Asia to bring any material gains; the growing recognition that the days when land-grabbing could be indulged in with impunity were gone, and that a policy of industrialisation and trade expansion offered a better solution to the surplus population problem than either emigration or territorial aggrandisement; the growth of an anti-military movement in Japan itself; and a growing demand among the public for relief from the heavy burden of swollen armaments.

From this brief enumeration of the principal causes, it will be seen that the change was due in part to a definite change of heart, brought about by force of circumstances, and in part to the removal of what Japan considered to be a threat to her own safety. Her former military activities, though partly actuated by what she conceived to be the requirements of national defence, had been mainly aggressive in nature. Her naval expansion was more the outcome of genuine fear for her own safety and was primarily defensive. This should become clearer if the causes enumerated above are examined in rather more detail.

Frederick Moore, in his recently published work,<sup>1</sup> clarifies an interesting and important point regarding the huge American capital ship programme of 1919 and Japan's answer thereto, a point that is all too often overlooked. It was, he emphasises, simply a revival and extension of the 1916 programme; and in carrying out this expansion of their Navy, the American Government was thinking, not of Japan, but of Europe. In the early days of the War, prior to her joining the Allies, America had suffered much inconvenience and loss from having her merchant

<sup>1</sup> "America's Naval Challenge," published by The Macmillan Co. New York, 1929.

vessels searched at sea. The President therefore conceived the idea that, in order to defend American commerce in distant waters "... against any possible adversary," and to preserve "... the freedom of the seas" in time of war as in time of peace, it was necessary to build up a fleet that would be second to none. The first programme with this end in view was framed in 1916; but, with America's entry into the War in the following spring, the battleship programme was dropped in favour of a programme of destroyers and cargo vessels. Then came the Armistice and, within three weeks of signing it, the old plan was revived and President Wilson came to Congress with his programme of post-Jutland ships superior to any in the British or Japanese navies.

To everyone but the President it seemed that Japan was the potential enemy against whom America was building. Strength was given to this belief by the anti-Japanese agitations that were then taking place in America and by the open sympathy shown by Americans towards China in her dealings with Japan, both of which manifestations called forth strong anti-American feeling in Japan. The result was inevitable. America having set the pace in naval construction, Japan took up what she conceived to be the challenge, as the only explanation that seemed plausible was that America was preparing for war with her.

The Washington Conference was called in order to stop this deadly race in armaments, and succeeded in so far as capital ships were concerned. Owing to the spectacular nature of the mutual reductions agreed upon, this scrapping of battleships is apt to be regarded as the outstanding achievement of that Conference. From the point of view of the so-called change of heart that took place in Japan, however, this accomplishment was of only secondary importance. The most important outcome of the conference, from the Japanese point of view, was the agreement whereby the construction of new fortifications and

bases within a specified area was forbidden. Had this agreement not been reached, Japan would certainly not have agreed to the 5-5-3 ratio. She might even have withdrawn from the Conference altogether. The scrapping of battleships and adoption of the ratio were contingent on it. Had there been no such agreement, America would have been at liberty to construct first class naval bases within striking distance of Japan, and Japan could not have afforded to reduce her naval strength in the face of such a possibility.

With the removal of this threat, Japan began to feel easier in her mind. The time seemed ripe for that general change from an aggressive to a pacific policy that has been so marked in recent years. Her military excursions on the neighbouring mainland had proved costly and had brought but negligible material gains in their train. They had, moreover, brought down the suspicion and mistrust of the other Powers on Japan, and had resulted in economic boycotts against her in China, the boycott being the one weapon in the Chinese armoury that can do her real harm. Japan showed her wisdom, therefore, when, at Washington, she declared her intention of liquidating her losses on the Asiatic mainland to the extent of withdrawing her troops from Shantung and Eastern Siberia at the earliest possible moment.

One thing led to another, and with the decision to desist from her former policy of military aggression in those regions, the need of retaining so large a military establishment in times of peace disappeared. Of her own free will therefore, she carried out two successive cuts in her land forces and reduced the strength of her Standing Army from 272,000 to about 210,000, and the number of her divisions from twenty-one to seventeen.

In part, these reductions were due to the reasons ascribed above; but other factors also helped to bring it about. The desire for relief from the heavy burden of taxation imposed by swollen naval armaments had played

its part in bringing Japan to the conference table at Washington. In like manner, the popular demand for further financial relief had not a little to do with the subsequent decision to reduce the size of the Army. Added to this was the growth of a very definite anti-military movement ; barely perceptible at first, but increasing rapidly after the War, with the full support of the vernacular Press.

Japan was, in fact, by no means exempt from the World-wide reaction and war-weariness that set in after the signing of the Armistice, and the anti-military movement by which it was expressed took the form of demanding reduction of the armed forces and reduction of the power of the military authorities. It played its part therefore, not only in bringing about the cuts in Army strength, but also in urging the withdrawal of troops from the mainland of Asia.

Of the main factors behind the change that has come over Japanese policy in the past ten years there remains, then, but one more to examine. This is the question of emigration. Even prior to the War, Japan had shown, by the readiness with which she entered into the " Gentlemen's Agreement " with America, her willingness to restrict the flow of Japanese emigrants to countries where their presence was not welcome. Nevertheless, the immigration question was a constant source of friction between Japan and the United States, and Japan for her part felt aggrieved that, not only was she debarred from easing the growing pressure of population by territorial expansion, but that no one even seemed willing to help her ease it by accepting her emigrants. Finally, however, having become convinced that both these solutions to her population problem were unobtainable, she hit upon the one remaining alternative. If her surplus population could not be exported abroad, they must be given work at home. The only way to do this was to carry out a policy of industrialisation, combined with trade expansion.

This, then, as already explained in the previous chapter, was the policy to which she turned ; and, as she was dependent on outside sources for almost all the raw material required for her mills, her foundries, and her factories, it became all the more important to cultivate peaceful and friendly relations, both with those who could supply her needs in this respect and with those to whom she, in turn, desired to sell her manufactures and finished products.

From this brief examination of the principal causes leading up from her policy of aggression of ten years ago to her present strong advocacy of peace, one feature common to each is clearly discernible. This is the economic factor. It would, in fact, be hardly too much to say that the economic factor played as important a part in the aggressive policy of the War and immediate post-War period as in the substitution of that policy by her present strong advocacy of peace.

Being poorly endowed by nature with mineral products and other raw material, Japan has, for a long time past, cast envious eyes on the rich sources of supply waiting to be developed on the neighbouring mainland. Taking advantage of the preoccupation of the other Powers in the War, she sought, by military excursions and other aggressive means, to secure control of these. Actually, as already noted, the material gains obtained thereby were not commensurate with the heavy cost in upkeep of her military forces in those regions, and were more than offset by the losses, both direct and indirect, incurred from the boycotts instituted against her by the Chinese, and from the suspicions and mistrust she aroused among the other Powers. Possibly, if the net gains had been well in Japan's favour, her people might have been ready to overlook the losses and to continue their support of this policy. But the facts were otherwise, and the people began to murmur. The Government rather reluctantly came to recognise, as other countries had done before,

that the days of land-grabbing and aggression were of the past, and that economic imperialism was far cheaper and fully as effective in the long run. Japan's recognition of this truth, it may be remarked in passing, though tardy, would seem to rule out the likelihood, believed in by many even now, that she will ever attempt to annex Manchuria or any other sections of the neighbouring mainland, unless some unexpected development occurs.

This, however, is a digression. It is merely noted here, by way of further illustrating the economic factor, that has played so conspicuous a part in Japan's change from an aggressive to a pacific policy.

This economic factor is likewise discernible, both in the former emigration policy and in the policy of industrialisation, that has largely succeeded it as a means of solving the population question. It is seen, too, in the desire shown at the Washington Conference to reach an agreement enabling a reduction in expenditure on armaments to be effected. It is fully as visible also in the decision to reduce the size of the Army. Look where we may, the important rôle played by the economic factor in the general policy of Japan is evident. And nowhere has it been more in evidence than in the stand she has taken up in regard to the naval conference at London this year.<sup>1</sup>

Without wishing to appear cynical, it may, in fact, be said that Japan's readiness to seek agreements with the other leading Powers, enabling her to carry out further naval reduction, is due primarily to economic considerations. It may be linked in a common yoke with a sincere desire for World peace ; but that too, in the final analysis, is based on similar considerations. Japan is, in fact, neither better nor worse than any other nation in this respect. The fact is, that the World War proved beyond any shadow of doubt that the economic interests of all countries are now so closely interwoven, that the victor

<sup>1</sup> This was written shortly after Japan had agreed to the proposed compromise, but before the Conference ended.



is made to suffer to almost as great an extent as the vanquished. It is plainly to the interest of everyone, therefore, that war should be ruled out as far as is humanly possible. In like manner, the immense increase in costs of naval construction and maintenance since pre-War days has made all nations, especially those with comparatively short purses, chary of indulging in the luxury of armament competition.<sup>1</sup> Rather has it made them anxious to seek out agreements with their principal potential enemies, to enable them, without danger to national defence, to reduce their naval strength and thereby cut down expenditure.

For a country like Japan, poor in natural resources and lacking the financial reserves of strength of Britain, and more particularly of America, this question of easing the burden of armaments from off the shoulders of the luckless taxpayer is of special importance. The present Japanese Government, pledged as it is to a policy of economy and retrenchment, is particularly anxious to find a means to ease that burden. Its sincerity in wishing to see a successful outcome to the Arms Conference called in London in January this year (1930) could not, therefore, be doubted. It was, in fact, this desire for financial relief from the heavy burden of armaments that served as the principal motive of the Japanese insistence that limitation, unaccompanied by actual reduction of armaments, could not be regarded as sufficient. This principle was laid down very clearly in her reply to the British invitation, which she concluded with the words: "It is not merely limitation but also reduction of armaments that all nations should seek to attain"; and for weeks prior even to the receipt of the invitation, Japanese official and unofficial spokesmen, in common with all the leading journals of the country, were constantly reiterating their stand, that actual reduction, not "...restricted armament

<sup>1</sup> Some interesting comparisons between pre-War and post-War costs are given by Mr. Hector Bywater in his "Navies and Nations" (pp. 14-15), published by Messrs. Constable and Co. 1927.

expansion," should be the goal for which the conference should strive.

The problem for Japan, therefore, resolved itself into two parts, one based primarily on economic considerations, the other on those of national defence. For economic reasons she wished to reach an agreement enabling her to reduce the size of her Navy or, at the very least, to obviate the necessity of any further expansion. For purposes of national security, she considered it essential to maintain a ratio of not less than 70 per cent. with the largest force of 8-inch cruisers and with the largest total force of auxiliary craft afloat, and to retain her existing strength in submarines.

These three claims, put forward from considerations of national defence, could not be regarded as unreasonable. Especially was this true of the demand for a 70 per cent. ratio in cruisers armed with 8-inch guns ; for, at the present time, she is superior to America in this class of vessel and has rather over 70 per cent. of the British strength. Yet it was this particular claim of hers that provided the greatest difficulty in the matter of acquiescence, as Britain had practically committed herself to agreeing to America expanding her 8-inch cruiser force to 180,000 tons and to England contenting herself with 30,000 tons less. If, therefore, Japan was to have 70 per cent. of the American strength in this type of war craft, it meant that not only would she have to increase her own existing strength (if America insisted on building up to the maximum allotted her by England), and thereby forgo her desire for armament reduction, but it meant also that she would have to build up to 84 per cent. of the British strength.

The compromise plan submitted to Tokyo on March 15 proposed to accept only one of Japan's three main claims, namely 70 per cent. in the total tonnage of auxiliary craft. It was strongly opposed, therefore, by the naval authorities, and for more than two weeks the question of acceptance or rejection hung in the balance, while the conflicting

demands of national defence, of international relations, and of economy and finance, were weighed one against the other.

The final outcome is well known. On April 1 Japan sent her reply, accepting the proposed figures, but with certain reservations. By her acceptance she showed that considerations of international friendship, and of her economic and financial problems (which, as shown elsewhere, are so closely inter-related) were considered to be of greater importance than the purely naval aspect and would, in fact, be of indirect assistance to national defence. The reservations, however, showed that the claims of the naval authorities were regarded as by no means unreasonable, and could not therefore be ignored entirely.

The Japanese Government is deserving of commendation for the broad, statesmanlike view taken in agreeing to compromise in this way. Nevertheless, one can readily appreciate the feelings of the naval experts, who endeavoured to the last to persuade the Government against accepting anything less than the terms that they considered to be the minimum necessary to ensure the security of their Empire.

Japan being, like England, vitally dependent on the safety of her maritime communications for much of her food supplies and most of her raw material, has much the same requirements as England in the matter of national defence. A large cruiser force is therefore essential for the purpose of safeguarding her trade routes. Generally speaking, it may be said that a number of small light cruisers, rather than heavily armed vessels, is what she requires. Owing, however, to the offensive capabilities of the 10,000-ton type carrying 8-inch guns, she deems it necessary to have a ratio, vis-à-vis America, of at least 70 per cent. of vessels similarly armed, as cruisers with lighter armament would be no match for them.

In fixing this ratio, the naval authorities have the future rather than the present in view. They are considering the day, probably not so far distant, when the battleship and the battle-cruiser are abolished, and the 10,000-ton

cruiser automatically takes their place as the capital ship. Japan agreed to 60 per cent. in capital ships at Washington, because the restrictions imposed on naval bases ruled out the possibility of bases for such vessels within striking distance of Japan ; but bases available for 10,000-ton cruisers already exist within striking distance of her shores. This is a serious matter for Japan, and one that cannot be overlooked, for their existence will increase her problems of national defence if, and when, the 10,000-tonner becomes the largest and heaviest-armed type of warship afloat. It is for this reason that Japan, while accepting the figures of the Reed-Matsudaira plan for a limited period, has made it plain that this is not to be taken as an abandonment of her claims for a 70 per cent. ratio for good and all.

Although she has had to modify her original claims to some extent, the reservations attached to her acceptance leave her free to press them once more, if need be, in years to come and, in the meantime, enable her to effect reductions in her naval strength and to save large sums of money. The financial relief that it brings to her is, in fact, the outstanding feature of the agreement.

There is good reason to believe that America would not have agreed to an extension of the capital ship holiday if Japan had remained adamant in the matter of auxiliary craft ; and if no agreement on auxiliaries had been forthcoming, Japan would probably have felt compelled to carry out a programme of auxiliary construction on the lines of the tentative "replacement" programme announced in the Japanese Press towards the end of August last year. According to the papers, this was to include four 10,000-ton cruisers, fifteen first-class destroyers and an undefined number of smaller destroyers, submarines, gunboats, oil carriers, and anti-submarine craft, and was to cost something in the region of Y. 400,000,000<sup>1</sup> spread over a period of six or eight years.

Coming, as this announcement did, at a time when the

<sup>1</sup> Some papers put it as high as Y. 600,000,000.

MacDonald-Dawes conversations were nearly completed, there were many who believed that it was no more than a "paper" programme, with which to bargain at the conference foreshadowed by the Anglo-American deliberations. This suggestion was, of course, stoutly denied by the Japanese authorities; but, justified or not though this interpretation may have been, a certain amount of auxiliary craft replacement was bound to have been carried out in the near future, if no agreement had been reached. Japan would therefore have been faced with heavy expenditure for the replacement both of capital ships and auxiliaries.

Unlike the British, the Japanese prefer to formulate building programmes running over a fixed number of years, spacing them out in such a way that the yearly expenditure on naval construction may remain more or less constant. In the years immediately preceding the Washington Conference, more than Y. 270,000,000 a year was being spent on naval construction; but, since the fiscal year 1923-4, by which time the financial readjustments necessitated by the Washington Treaty had been completed, the yearly expenditure on this score has averaged only about Y. 88,000,000. As the following table will show, this figure has varied but little from year to year, even though at times there were as many as three programmes running consecutively :

(In units of Y. 1000)

		Revised " 8-8 " Programme		Auxiliary Replacement		Total
		Capital Ships	Auxiliaries	Preliminary	Main	
1923-4	-	52,252	39,010	—	—	91,262
1924-5	-	32,000	57,816	—	—	89,816
1925-6	-	31,194	56,805	—	—	88,000
1926-7	-	8,000	72,000	8,000	—	88,000
1927-8	-	—	75,000	10,000	4,725	89,725
1928-9	-	—	68,237	8,000	11,926	88,163
1929-30	-	—	—	—	88,000	88,000
1930-31	-	—	—	—	88,000	88,000
1931-32	-	—	—	—	68,657	68,657

These figures are only approximate, but they may be taken as sufficiently correct for the purpose of illustrating the point noted above, that expenditure is spaced out so as to remain at a fairly constant figure from year to year. The headings given to each column, however, require explaining to make them clear.

The famous "8-8" programme of 1920 called not only for a permanent capital fleet of eight battleships and eight battle-cruisers, all of modern type. It included also the construction of a large number of auxiliary craft, these latter forming as integral a part of the programme as did the super-Dreadnoughts themselves. Under the treaty which resulted from the Washington Conference, Japan agreed to cancel fourteen of the new capital ships projected and, in the summer of 1922, set about revising her original plans for the construction of auxiliary vessels. This revision resulted in the number of cruisers originally planned being reduced from nine to eight, and the number of destroyers from thirty-seven to twenty-four, while instead of forty-six submarines the Japanese naval authorities decided to build only twenty-two.<sup>1</sup>

According to the estimates submitted at the time, the appropriations for rounding off the two portions of the revised "8-8" programme were to be spread over the five-year period 1923-8: but, as a result of the 1923 Earthquake, the period of completion was extended by one year. The first two columns in the table given above show how these appropriations were spread out.

By the revision of the auxiliary construction portion of the programme, it was hoped to provide Japan with a well-balanced fleet. The naval authorities wished to ensure that this balance should be maintained. Accordingly, in 1925, they came forward with a new programme of construction, intended for the replacement of auxiliary vessels reaching the age-limit. Under the plans then for-

<sup>1</sup> Actually this cut was not so great as it appears, as most of the vessels retained for construction were redesigned on a larger scale.



mulated, it was proposed to build, during the period 1926-31, four cruisers, twenty destroyers, five submarines, three gunboats, and five special service vessels, at an estimated cost of Y. 320,000,000. The Finance Minister asserted that the financial condition of the country at that time would not permit of this heavy expenditure. His naval colleague, however, insisted that it was essential for national defence; and it was only by the personal intervention of the Premier that a serious Cabinet crisis was avoided and a compromise finally reached. As a preliminary measure, sanction was given for the appropriation of Y. 26,000,000, spread over the three-year period 1926-9, for the construction of four destroyers; and a year later the balance of the proposed programme was approved, except that one destroyer, one submarine, one gunboat, and three special service ships were cut out. With these five vessels eliminated, the total appropriations for this "replacement" programme (including the Y. 26,000,000 already sanctioned) were reduced to Y. 287,308,000 and the time limit prolonged by one year. It will be seen, therefore, that the 1926-29 programme of four destroyers really formed part of the programme sanctioned the following year. For clearness' sake, however, it has been shown separately in the table given above.

From this table it will be seen that the allotment set aside for the final year (1931-32) of the current programme is roughly Y. 20,000,000 less than the average since the period 1923-4. When, however, the time came round, the expenditure on naval construction in that particular fiscal year, and for several years subsequently, would have been considerably in excess of the recent Y. 88,000,000 a year average, if no agreement had been reached at the conference in London. Unofficial estimates quoted in the 1928-9 session of the Japanese Diet indicated that, unless some agreement was reached in the meantime, Japan would have to find something like Y. 820,000,000 for new

capital ships and Y. 380,000,000 for auxiliary ships replacement, or Y. 1,200,000,000 in all, after 1931, including at least Y. 448,000,000 for capital ships during the six-year period, 1931-7, and Y. 337,000,000 for auxiliary vessels during the five years, 1932-7. In other words, including the Y. 68,657,000 already appropriated under the current programme for 1931-2, the average yearly expenditure on naval construction during the six years, 1931-7, would have been around Y. 142,000,000, and possibly even more, had it not been for the agreement reached at the London Conference. This is, of course, only about half as much as Japan was spending on this item in the years immediately prior to the Washington Conference, but it is about Y. 54,000,000 a year more than she has been spending in the past six or seven years. Little wonder then, that Japan was so anxious to see the conference lead to an actual reduction in armaments rather than to "restricted armament expansion." This second alternative would probably, in fact, have necessitated an even greater expenditure on her part, as the unofficial estimates quoted above are based on the assumption that only replacement, not an increase, of existing vessels would be required.

Happily Japan is now saved from the prospect of this huge outlay. Instead of having to meet a bill of something like Y. 850,000,000 for naval construction during the six-year period 1931-7, the total expenditure under this heading is expected to reach only about Y. 350,000,000. If, moreover, at the end of that time, the Powers decide to abolish the capital ship, as is quite conceivable, Japan, in common with the others, will be saved from ever having to replace those now in her possession, and still further saving will thereby be effected in years to come.

Such, then, is Japan's position in regard to naval reduction. Both for the purpose of cutting down her own expenditure on armaments and for helping on the cause of world peace, which is of primary importance to her now

that she has embarked on a policy of industrialisation and trade expansion, she was anxious to reach a satisfactory agreement with the other naval powers to bring about definite reduction all round. At the same time, she considered that a 70 per cent. ratio in the matter of 8-inch gun cruisers with America, the Power demanding the largest allotment of such vessels, was essential to meet the requirements of national defence and, for the same reason, she was, and still is, strongly opposed to the abolition of submarines. In so far as under-water craft are concerned, she has agreed to an all-round reduction in their total tonnage and to a limitation in size of vessels. She has also expressed her willingness to restrict their use in war time. To actual abolition, however, she is steadfastly opposed. Her arguments for retention of this weapon are similar to those advanced by France and Italy: adaptiveness to her own special requirements and relative cheapness of construction and maintenance. To this she adds the contention, that submarine warfare is no more cruel, in fact less so, than the use of poison gas, and that if the abolition of submarines is to be urged on purely humanitarian grounds, gas warfare and the aerial bombardment of towns should likewise be prohibited.

Thanks to the agreements reached at Washington, Japan was able to reduce the proportion of her national budget spent on armaments from close on 50 per cent. to roughly 27 or 28 per cent. This is a big reduction, but the percentage is still high compared with that of Britain and America and most other countries. By the agreements just concluded at London, however, she will be able to bring it down still further, and the money thus saved is to be used as far as possible for the lightening of the people's burdens in the matter of taxation and for the relief, so it is said, of the unemployed.<sup>1</sup> In conclusion

<sup>1</sup> Some of it, however, is probably to go towards the expansion of the Naval Air Force and improvement of air defence generally.

therefore, the following observations may perhaps be apposite.

Economic and military considerations, like military and political, sometimes clash. At times they coincide naturally or can at least be brought into agreement by a slight modification or compromise. Japan, since the opening of her doors to foreign intercourse in the middle of last century, has alternated between giving preference first to one and then to the other, whenever the two have come into conflict. The past few years have witnessed an increasing tendency to attach primary importance to the economic aspect. Seldom, if ever, has this been better demonstrated than in the case of the London Conference, where it was clearly shown that, when it comes to the question of a slight naval sacrifice being necessary as the price of a real economic gain, that sacrifice will be made, provided that the requirements of national defence are not made to suffer unduly.

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